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Sunset
EASY HOME MAKEOVERS JUST ADD COLOR! P.39
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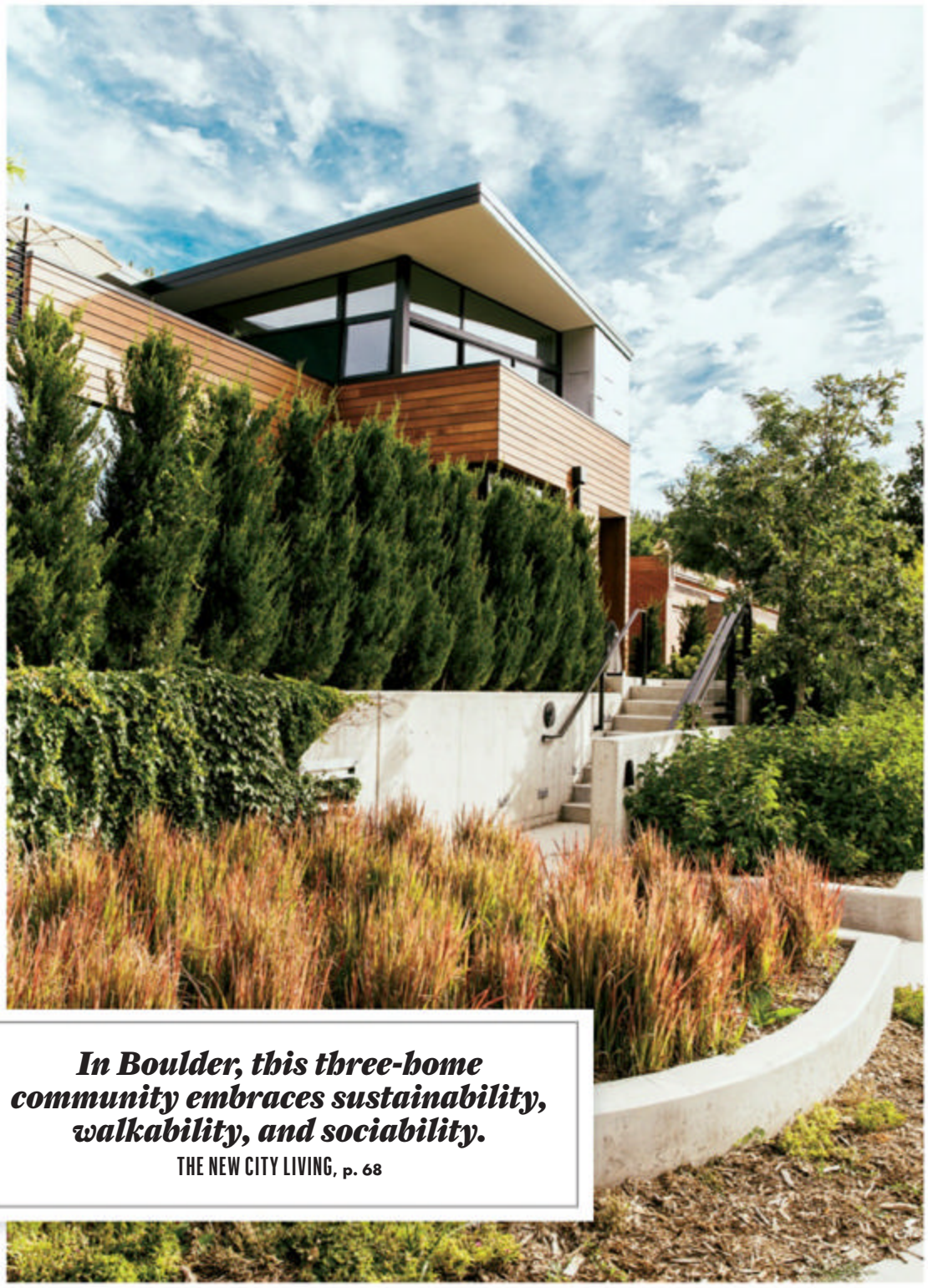

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Photograph by THOMAS J. STORY

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Our full guide to nutrition, ingredients, and techniques: *sunset.com/cookingguide.*

CORRECTION

A note to our friends in Crescent City, California: We know your town, we love your town, we've eaten delicious seafood in your town. We're sorry we mistakenly said you're in Oregon (March, page 71). It won't happen again.

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Take *Sunset* wherever you roam with our Digital Editions for **iPad, iPhone, Android,** and **Kindle Fire.** You'll get every story from our print magazine, plus bonus features. **This month:** Our *Easy Basics* video series shows you how to cook quinoa and make a perfect omelet. Get more info: *sunset.com/learnmore.*

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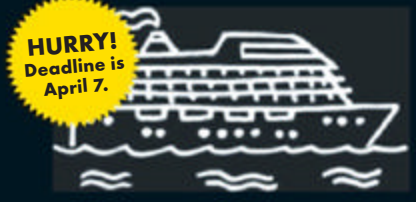

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FROM TOP: THOMAS J. STORY, ANNABELLE BREAKEY, ALICE CHO

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Sunset
CONVERSATIONS

NEW WAYS TO LIVE IN THE WEST

Some people are just born to do their jobs. Joanna Linberg, *Sunset*'s home editor, is one.

"I had a binder full of tear sheets on home design when I was 9," she says. "I used it to draw up plans for my dream home, whose main feature was a huge library with big windows that opened up onto a yard."

Joanna still likes that library idea, but her taste has evolved to embrace the sustainable ethos that is sweeping the West. "*Sunset* has such a great history of covering home innovations over the years, from solar panels to green roofs," she says (see cover, at right). The design pros she interviewed for this issue "energized" her about a future in which buildings produce their own energy and roof runoff nurtures edible gardens.

One idea Joanna has already embraced: Living in a town where she can walk to restaurants and public transit, even if it means squeezing into a smaller apartment. "When my husband and I moved here from Iowa, we left a 1,500-square-foot house and moved into a 475-square-foot apartment. Now we have a slightly bigger space, but I'll never go back to living in a house that we only use half of."

Joanna is part of a major demographic shift: Westerners of all ages are flocking back to cities, or staying put and remodeling as their families grow, often choosing convenience and culture over gigantic houses. This is hardly a compromise. In this issue you'll meet several families who "right-sized" in especially creative ways, stretching their cash, creating instant community, and living more stylishly all at once.

As for Joanna, being immersed in inventive design ideas for months has given her a new goal: "I really want to live in a 'living' building, one that creates more energy than it uses." In the meantime, she just wants to convince her landlord to let her paint her fireplace white—like interior designer Jill Soderlund did in her own house (page 44). "That's my favorite easy makeover idea," she says. "It looks so fantastic!"

We hope you'll be inspired by the ideas big and small in this issue. Let us know the design innovations you'd like to live with—write to us at *readerletters@sunset.com*.

PEGGY NORTHROP, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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A HOME EDITOR IN THE MAKING?

"This is a Lego cabin my daughter re-created from the cover of one of your magazines. Thanks for being her inspiration!"—BREANN BROWN, EUREKA, MT

FAR LEFT: THOMAS J. STORY; ABOVE: LINDA LAMB PETERS (2)

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BEST OF THE WEST

WHAT WE'RE TRACKING THIS MONTH

BEST LAST CHANCE

Strike a pose

Had Richard Avedon taken up gardening, he might have ended up with photos like these. To create his compelling images, the photographer JoSon (he uses a single name) shoots each bloom against a stark backdrop. You have until the end of the month to see them up close in *Fotanicals: The Secret Language of Flowers,* at the San Francisco Botanical Garden, or you can track down his book *JoSon: Intimate Portrait of Nature* (Graphis; $75). Also, consider this a heads-up about the garden's 75th anniversary celebrations, which kick off in late May and honor this venerable plant collection rooted in what is, essentially, 12 inches of topsoil floating on a sea of sand. Wild. *Exhibit free, garden $7; sfbotanicalgarden.org.*

JOSON

OPEN-SOURCE OUTDOORS

BEST INNOVATION

Until recently, organizing your camping trip was a fragmented process. You had to figure out which campground offered what you wanted, which agency among an alphabet soup's worth administered it (NPS, USFS, BLM, OSP, EMNRD…), and then there *might* be a link to that agency's concessionaire. Last year, a Bay Area website named Hipcamp aggregated everything you need to know about California's public-land campgrounds, plus links for reservations—and it's expanding to include campgrounds in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. *hipcamp.com.*

"I saw what I had hoped for: silver streaks running down the troughs of orange cliffs. Waterfalls. Not one, not two, but half a dozen. Silver water against red rock. Water in a dry land."

—From *All the Wild That Remains: Edward Abbey, Wallace Stegner, and the American West* by David Gessner; due this month from W.W. Norton & Company

BEST READ

BEST FOR REBOOTS

VINEYARD HAVENS

Bookending the sweet spot of Napa Valley wine country—that is, the stretch of State 29 between, to the south, the city of Napa itself and, to the north, the funky mud-bath town of Calistoga—is a pair of recently reinvented Victorian hotels. The first, the eight-room Parker Mansion (circa 1870), serves as a cool marble-and-taupe nucleus of an otherwise modern 41-room resort called Senza (top), owned by the family behind Hall Wines and set right where cul-de-sacs start giving way to vineyards. The second, a gingerbread villa called the Brannan Cottage Inn (above), occupies one of the original cottages that Calistoga's founder, the freewheeling Samuel Brannan, built for his hot-springs resort in 1860. Along with the appropriate antiques, its six bedrooms are furnished with Illy espresso machines, flat-screen TVs, and Roku boxes. The buccaneers of today should feel right at home. *Senza: From $239; senzahotel.com. Brannan: From $299; brannancottageinn.com.*

BEST OBJECT

ARTS & CRAFTS ALERT

Earthenware tile by William Bragdon and Chauncey Thomas, the cofounders of California Faience, which produced the stylized poppy tile in the 1920s as a part of its popular line of decorative objects. See it in *Of Cottages and Castles: The Art of California Faience* at Sacramento's Crocker Art Museum—the first exhibition on the Berkeley company. *$10; through May 17; crocker artmuseum.org.*

BEST WELCOME

A classic, refreshed

We've always loved the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, despite the occasionally dowdy detail. (The tearoom always felt a little like an overcrowded grade-school cafeteria.) Since January, however, these 120-plus rambling acres of prime San Marino, California, real estate have gained a suitably stylish entrance complex—officially called the Steven S. Koblik Education and Visitor Center—and gift shop (right), as well as a lovely little cafe with an outdoor terrace that's opening this month. And should you be attending a lecture at the new Rothenberg Hall, don't just rush to claim your seats: Stop and check out the Calder Bicentennial Tapestries, six dramatic recent acquisitions hanging in the auditorium's lobby. *From $20; huntington.org.*

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BEST HOOK-UP

CROSS-POLLINATION

Cooks, of course, have very definite opinions about flavor. But the chefs that Lane Selman knew, including such Portland stars as Jason "Ned Ludd" French, never dreamed that they could help retool the fruits and vegetables that farmers were growing. Selman, a researcher in organic agriculture at Oregon State University, decided it was time to make some introductions. (The seed growers she worked with were operating in a culinary vacuum. "They'd just take a bite of a new pepper they'd bred and say, 'Well, it tastes good to me!' ") This spring, thanks to her Culinary Breeding Network, the first crop of chef-driven cultivars comes to a seed catalog near you. Selman's picks: Stocky Red Roaster peppers, from Wild Garden Seed in Philomath, Oregon, and Indigo Cherry Drops and Indigo Pear Drops tomatoes, from OSU's Jim Myers. *wildgardenseed.com; awhaley.com.*

JOSÉ MANDOJANA

BEST "LIBRARY"

THE WILD IS CALLING

Going for a hike is something many of us take for granted, but it's not so easy for young people lacking resources and encouragement. The Washington Trails Association's Outdoor Leadership Training program aims to change that. Coordinator Andrew Pringle (center) helps teachers and volunteers lead hikes and camping expeditions, but the association's best idea is the gear library, a Seattle storefront with enough equipment to outfit a class of 30. Borrowing from the library is free—the trip's leader just has to complete one of Pringle's workshops first. *wta.org.*

SOME MOMENTS DESERVE AN AUDIENCE
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3

2

1

BACKCOUNTRY STYLE

BEST FINDS

While you're pondering which of our "secret parks" (page 19) to visit, immerse yourself in reminders of America's best idea.

1. Sure, you could plan your trip online. But why not go old school with this leather-bound National Parks Atlas? *$38; domesticdomestic.com.*

2. This Aesop toiletries kit honors the Headlands Center for the Arts, in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. *$37; shop.headlands.org/products/headlands-coastal-kit.*

3. Rocky Mountain National Park turns 100 this year—it's about time Pendleton made a blanket for it. Done! *From $219; pendleton-usa.com.*

4. There's no better place than this log pillow to rest your head while dreaming of the next wilderness adventure. *$22/pillow; kikkerland.com.*

5. Along with reprints of once-lost parks posters from the 1930s, the Seattle company Ranger Doug sells its own new-but-retro designs, such as this. *$40; rangerdoug.com.*

6. Park-themed reds from The National Parks Wine Collection and Montana's Ten Spoon winery set the mood—and in the case of the former, help support our parks. *$17; nationalparkswinecollection.com. From $19; tenspoon.com.*

7. Two of the 7 Wonders of Washington patches give a shout-out to the state's most famous national parks. *$6/patch; kimberlin.co.*

4

5

6

7

JEFFERY CROSS (9)

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OVERLOOKED PARKS

OFFSHORE ASSETS

Sallie Tisdale explores the Channel Islands, seen by millions but visited by few. Plus, your guide to three other underrated parks.

Photographs by **IAN SHIVE**

STAND ON SCORPION BEACH on the island of Santa Cruz, 20 miles west of Ventura. This is a place of wilderness and rough, idyllic beauty, a faint shadow just off the Southern California mainland. People come to Santa Cruz Island to camp, hike, kayak, dive, snorkel, and look for rare birds. People don't come to Santa Cruz to sit on a pebbly beach. On this warm September day, I can see blue sky and ocean and golden, grassy hills—but hardly any people.

Then a head appears in the dark waters of the bay, and soon a man in a wetsuit swims to the nearby rocks, carefully removes his fins, mask, and snorkel, and walks up to join me.

"How often do you get to the islands?" I ask him. The Channel Islands are a short boat ride from 18 million people, but only about 90,000 people visit every year, making it one of the least visited national parks in the country.

"I've lived in Ventura for 40 years," he says. "And I've never been here before." We contemplate that in silence for a few minutes. Then he adds, "I'm kicking myself now."

Channel Islands National Park consists of five islands—Santa Barbara, Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel. "Each island is like a different national park," Yvonne Menard, a National Park Service ranger, tells me at the visitor center in Ventura Harbor. "It's like we have five parks in one."

More than 2,000 species of plants and animals live on the islands, about 145 of which are found nowhere else on the planet. Because of their stunning biodiversity, the islands are routinely called the Galápagos of North America. Menard, who has worked at the park for 20 years, refuses to tell me her favorite. "They're all different," she says. "Wherever you go, you think you should go back to see more. They get under your skin."

The variety is breathtaking. Santa Cruz, at 96 square miles, is California's largest island, folded with canyons, cliffs, and grasslands; its peak is 2,450 feet high. Anacapa is spare, with famous 360° views and many birds and wildflowers. Santa Rosa has rolling hills and sand dunes, the park's only lagoon, and a stand of the very rare Torrey pine tree.

A visitor must choose. I was drawn to tiny Santa Barbara, a solitary block some 40 miles to the southwest, with dense populations of seals and seabirds. But the dock (since repaired) had washed out in a summer storm. Santa Rosa is 40 miles off the Ventura Coast, a daunting three-hour boat ride each way in the rough waters of autumn. I thought about San Miguel, which has a fossil caliche forest and a rookery of more than 30,000 seals and sea lions, one of the largest concentrations of pinnipeds in the world. San Miguel still belongs to the U.S. Department of Defense, which used it as a Navy bombing range into the 1970s before letting the National Park Service take over management. But the Navy has abruptly decided to close the island, "due to recent concerns of possible unexploded ordnance."

I opt for Santa Cruz and Anacapa.

ALMOST ALL OF THE PARK'S VISITORS arrive by a passenger ferry run by a single concessionaire. On a sunny Monday morning in September, the two dozen people heading to Santa Cruz include a few backpackers, a group of friends going out to kayak, and several day-hikers. We bounce across on sun-flecked waves, while cheerful passengers lean on the bow, watching the islands grow into imposing mountains.

The ferry lands at two places on Santa Cruz. Most passengers step off at Scorpion, which has three kayak outfitters and a large campground about a half-mile away. Ten of us go on to Prisoners Harbor to the west, where the park service is restoring a natural wetland and where a few preserved ranch buildings stand in the shadows of high hills. Two young men heft big packs and wave good-bye, setting out for the 18-mile hike back to Scorpion. The rest of us head to Pelican Bay. The Nature Conservancy owns much of the land on Santa Cruz, and Prisoners is at the dividing line. Since we are traveling into Nature Conservancy land, we have to sign waivers and go with a guide.

Humans have lived on the Channel Islands for at least 13,000 years. The Chumash held sway until the 1820s, followed by explorers, hermits, pirates, ranchers, sailors and soldiers, and speculators of many kinds. Some of the endemic species have been harried into near extinction—by people, but also by rats, invasive plants, feral livestock, even eagles. The rare island fox is the smallest canid species in North America, about the size of a house cat and weighing around 5 pounds. When DDT almost wiped out the native bald eagles, golden eagles took over the territory. They were first attracted to piglets but soon discovered a fox buffet.

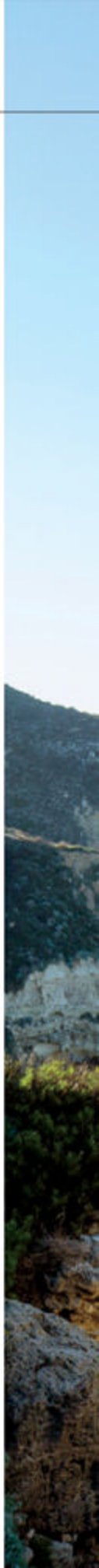
Restoration is a work of patience, hand labor, and sometimes weaponry. The black rat was eradicated from Anacapa in a controversial aerial poisoning of its three islets. More than 5,000 pigs were tracked and killed over two years on Santa Cruz. Golden eagles were relocated to mainland

CHANNEL ISLANDS N.P.

FEE:
NONE

SIZE:
249,354 ACRES

2014 VISITORS:
348,735
(TO BOTH THE ISLANDS AND THE MAINLAND VISITOR CENTERS);
90,000
JUST TO THE ISLANDS



Potato Harbor on Santa Cruz Island.

OVERLOOKED PARKS

Cavern Point Trail on Santa Cruz Island.

California, and bald eagles were reintroduced. Endemic and rare species like the Anacapa deer mouse and *Dudleya gnoma,* a succulent also known as the munchkin live-forever, are rebounding.

We pass many piles of fox scat, purple from their berry diet, but see no foxes. We can see into a canyon where large eucalyptus trees, brought for shade by ranchers, have been clear-cut. Fennel plants, brought as an oil crop, were spread widely by rooting feral pigs. The plants are still being removed or sprayed with herbicide; some hillsides are covered with silver-gray stands of dead fennel.

The sun is hot as we climb up the ridge. The Channel Islands were formed in part from upwelling magma, which folded in layers of diatomaceous earth; from the trail, we can look east and see clearly the layers of lava and ancient seabed in the scraped white cliffs. Scientists continue to study Native American sites, and more: The world's most complete pygmy mammoth skeleton was discovered on Santa Rosa.

I leave the group early and head back, enjoying the solitude and the sunshine and the grand view appearing and disappearing through the trees. The wind is steady, carrying the arrhythmic *awk-awk* of big ravens as I work my way down through rocky canyons and low stands of island pine. As I round the last corner, a petite bushy-tailed fox flicks past me, gone in a moment's glance.

Legend has it that the sheep here, lacking a reliable water source, licked the moisture off one another's wool.

A DAY LATER, I am at Scorpion, crossing the cobblestone beach for the rows of colorful kayaks near the water. JD, my instructor from Channel Islands Outfitters, introduces me to my fellow students: six young men and women from Poland and Serbia, working their way around the American West.

"Take pity," I say, looking with longing at the group of grayhairs with the other instructor. I have never kayaked before and don't relish trying to keep up with 20-year-olds. JD helps us with gear, and we haul our kayaks down the stony beach. After a little practice in the small bay, we kayak west.

Two major currents meet a cold upwelling of ocean water in this channel, creating a great natural aquarium with plentiful food for the entire chain. The ocean for 6 nautical miles around the islands is a National Marine Sanctuary with strict regulations on fishing in some areas, which means the fishing is good and the sightseeing better. Sea caves riddle the cliffs, and the Painted Cave (some 20 miles away to the west) is one of the largest and deepest in the world.

In the kayaks, I quickly find that my companions' youth is no advantage. They keep stopping to splash one another and fall overboard on

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purpose, allowing me to catch up. We follow JD in and out of caves, through arches and wide tunnels, and skirt the cliffs through easy waves, watching harbor seals and cormorants.

After a few hours, we switch paddles for snorkels and slip into the chilly waters by the pier. The Channel Islands are renowned for scuba diving. The water is cold—ranging from 50° to 70°—but divers know that cold often means clarity, and the visibility can reach 100 feet and more. Divers find sunlit kelp forests where plants may grow 50 feet tall with healthy fish populations that include huge black sea bass and halibut and many seals and sea lions. I find the snorkeling delightful, even a short distance from the beach. The swaying kelp can't completely hide the fish: a California moray, a stout cabezon, many opaleyes, a striped sheepshead.

Then I warm myself in the tempered sun and wander in search of the island scrub jay—on the cliffs, on the beach, anywhere—because it is found nowhere else on earth except Santa Cruz. But the closest I come is a pair of ravens trying to take apart my backpack.

On the way home, the ferry captain takes a detour; he has seen two blue whales spouting in the distance. The Channel Islands have the largest collection of blue whales in the world, with about 10 percent of the world's population visiting here every summer. As we work our way closer, a humpback whale breaches behind us. Dozens of bottlenose dolphins and more than 200 common dolphins join us—leaping and riding the bow wave on the way back to Ventura Harbor.

WHEN I SIGN IN for the ferry to Anacapa, I am warned about rough seas and high wind. "It's Captain's call," the young woman at the Island Packers desk tells me. "You may not land; you may have to leave early." Anacapa is a small, sere place, but it is the closest of the islands to the mainland and attracts many casual visitors. One young woman wearing bright capri pants, ballet flats, and enormous dangling earrings stands on the dock for several minutes, trying to decide if she will brave the waves. At the last minute, the brightness of the morning seems to catch her in its net and she climbs aboard. I join her at a table inside the small cabin.

"First trip out?" I ask.

"First time on a boat!" she laughs, exhilarated.

Anacapa—from the Chumash name, *Anyapakh*, "mirage"—is really three sheer islets connected by sandbars. East Anacapa is the most accessible, and that by a steep cement staircase. We pitch and roll 11 miles through sloppy seas. Landing Cove, the park literature tells me, is "ideal for swimming, diving, snorkeling, and kayaking"; many intrepid kayakers come here to make their way around iconic Arch Rock. But when we wallow into Landing Cove, the sea is crashing and spouting out of blowholes in the pocked cliffs, a lethal roil of froth and waves.

There is no shade on Anacapa except for the roving shadow of a few historic Coast Guard buildings now used by rangers. The average rainfall here is less than 13 inches a year. Legend has it that the sheep that grazed here, lacking a reliable water source, turned to licking the condensation off one another's wool. Instead of shade, Anacapa has fields of island coreopsis, also called tree sunflower, blooming so brightly in the spring they can be seen from the mainland.

Taken together, all the trails of Anacapa add up to 2 miles, and visitors are required to stay on designated paths to protect the habitat. You can't get lost in this place. You can, however, get hurt; the cliffs are friable, and railroad ties are laid out at points to mark the safe edge. We wander singly and in small groups through the midday sun. The calls of brown pelicans, Western gulls, and unseen pinnipeds float by in the rush of a wind strong enough to make me stumble.

At Inspiration Point, Middle and West Anacapa march away in a rough, eroded ridge like old teeth. The great and humbling plate of sea surrounds us. Five dive boats are anchored to leeward on the first day of lobster season. Turning, turning: Arch Rock to the east, the distant mainland, the endless sea turning gold in the afternoon, the seductive cliff's edge, and the impossibly sharp needles of rock just one tempting step away.

Anacapa rewards the long view and it also rewards the close look. On one rise, the soil glitters with broken abalone shell from a Chumash midden. Big piles of invasive ice plant have been pulled up to die and become mulch for carefully planted native flora, staked behind sturdy little mesh windbreaks.

The group gathers at a few picnic tables. The naturalist announces that we'll be leaving early, and we head back down the stairs an hour ahead of time—all of us but one, the young woman in ballet flats and big earrings. I think of the railroad ties. Finally a ranger bounds up the stairs and tracks her down, herding her back to the boat like a terrier.

Across the channel, we lean on the rail together, holding tight through the bouncy ride home.

"You know, we were all waiting for you," I tell her. "We didn't know where you'd gone."

"I know," she says, without apology. "I just didn't want to leave."

GETTING HERE
The park has visitor centers in Ventura *(1901 Spinnaker Dr.)* and Santa Barbara *(113 Harbor Way, fourth floor)*. Island Packers *(from $59; islandpackers.com)* offers boat trips to the islands. Reservations are recommended and visitors must bring everything they need, including food and water. Channel Islands Aviation *($1,100/half-day; flycia.com)* offers private plane service to Santa Rosa, and Truth Aquatics *(varies by island; truthaquatics.com)* has two- and three-day live-aboard dive trips that may anchor at any of the islands.

BEST TIME TO GO
In spring, wildflowers are at their peak and bird migration is under way. In fall, water temperatures approach 70°, ocean visibility is at its best, and scuba divers and snorkelers can most easily explore the marine treasures around the islands.

WHERE TO STAY
There is one campground on each of the five islands. Ventura and Santa Barbara both have a slew of hotels and motels.

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MORE OVERLOOKED PARKS

1. NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

FEE: NONE | SIZE: 684,000 ACRES | 2014 VISITORS: 23,865

FROM THE VIEW POINT at Washington Pass or from the deck of a ferry traveling the 55-mile-long Lake Chelan, it's clear why everyone calls the North Cascades the American Alps: Our own rugged sawback range has more than 300 glaciers—one-quarter of all the lumbering ice sheets in the entire Lower 48. Thanks partly to topography that starts a few hundred feet above sea level and soars to 9,200, North Cascades is also home to 1,600 plant species—more than any other national park.

A 1937 government study found that "such a Cascade Park would outrank in its scenic, recreational, and wildlife values any existing national park and any other possibility for such a park within the United States," but it still took a few decades of squabbling to win official status. The mountains here are so steep, the valleys so deep, that most were never plundered by loggers or settlers, leaving a wilderness too wild for all but the most intrepid backpackers. In short, this isn't a tour-bus park. But yes, you can motor through it beginning in early May, stopping for a picnic in the forests at Rainy Pass (mile 2,599.6 of the Pacific Crest Trail). And yes, you can kayak through it, shoving off into fjordlike Ross Lake and sleeping in cabins that float on log booms.

That 55-mile-long ferry ride? It leads to Stehekin (population: 75), where a gravel road eventually broaches the park border—and the cinnamon rolls at the local bakery are worth the journey. But to truly experience our Alps, you need your own two feet and some moxie. Together, they'll carry you up to Hannegan Peak, a perch with views of everything from Mt. Baker to British Columbia. Up to Maple Pass, carpeted in purple during the summer. And up to Cascade Pass, with glimpses of a peak called Forbidden and a mountain called, yes, Magic. —*Evelyn Spence*

GETTING HERE
From Seattle, it's just 120 miles up I-5 and the North Cascades Hwy./State 20, a winding route that bisects the heart of the park. *nps.gov/noca.*

BEST TIME TO GO
July through September, after the alpine zone has melted and the wildflowers (Indian paintbrush, avalanche lily, lupine) have exploded. The highway is typically closed from November to April, as heavy snowfall buries the road so deeply that it takes six weeks to clear.

WHERE TO STAY
The base for pack trips in the 1940s, the Freestone Inn in Mazama has Western chic (wrought-iron chandeliers, river rock fireplaces) down to a T. On Diablo Lake, Colonial Creek Campground is first-come, first-served, with hiking trails right outside your tent flap. At the floating bungalows of Ross Lake Resort, Adirondack chairs look out at perfectly named Pyramid Peak.

ETHAN WELTY/TANDEM STOCK

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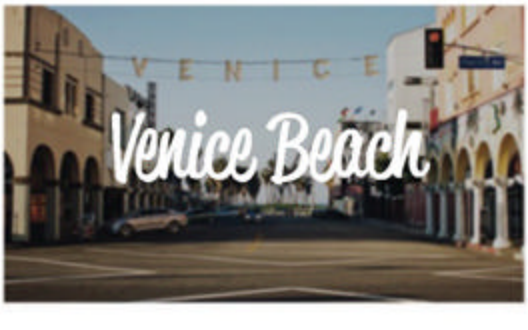

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- Celebs love this hidden gem with a small-town feel.
- Find charming stores, including one of the last independent book stores.
- Nosh at eclectic eateries, from trattorias to Thai & Caribbean.

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KOREATOWN

- Immerse yourself into a vibrant scene of late-night dining & a storied past.
- Try unique, culturally-inspired restaurants such as Pot and Commissary.
- Stroll parks & plazas; don't miss the peaceful Koreatown Pavilion Garden.

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HOLLYWOOD

- Trace the footsteps of Hollywood greats on the Walk of Fame.
- Book a stylish hotel; then discover some seriously cool lounges & bars.
- Catch a show at the Hollywood Bowl or the Pantages Theatre.

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MID-CITY MID-WILSHIRE

- Visit CBS's Television City & the Miracle Mile.
- Soak in the arts & culture; four major L.A. museums are on Museum Row.
- Shop The Grove, Original Farmers Market, plus an array of boutiques & funky stores on Melrose.

Neighborhoods.discoverLosAngeles.com

LITTLE TOKYO

- L.A.'s nucleus of Japanese culture & home to the Japanese American National Museum.
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SHERMAN OAKS

- Cruise legendary Ventura Boulevard & shop at Westfield Fashion Square.
- Score rare finds at one-of-a-kind fashion boutiques & thrift stores.
- So many good things to eat! Think oyster bars, gastro pubs & French cafés.

Neighborhoods.discoverLosAngeles.com

SAN PEDRO AT L.A. WATERFRONT

- Go on a boating adventure or check out the World War II era Battleship USS Iowa.
- Home of the World Cruise Center and Ports O' Call.
- Discover the Cabrillo Museum, and eclectic shopping at Crafted.

Neighborhoods.discoverLosAngeles.com

North Hollywood

- Explore the thriving NoHo Arts District.
- See a classic play or an experimental piece at one of 22 live theaters.
- Visit the WB Studio Hollywood and get a close look at the entertainment you love.

Neighborhoods.discoverLosAngeles.com

Westwood

- Visit the acclaimed Hammer Museum or UCLA's landmark Royce Hall.
- See the final resting place of iconic stars like Marilyn Monroe, Dean Martin and more.
- Watch a movie at one of the many vintage theaters & movie palaces.

Neighborhoods.discoverLosAngeles.com

Venice Beach

- Browse trendy shops on Abbot Kinney Blvd. or people watch on the famed boardwalk.
- Stroll the historic Venice canals.
- Walk or bike through blocks of art displays & murals, even painted lifeguard towers.

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SILVER LAKE

- Explore unique shops and galleries in America's Hippest Neighborhood (Forbes.com).
- Fuel up at an artisan café, then see a movie at the art-deco Vista Theater.
- Devour gourmet comfort food, gluten-free tapas & sip locally brewed beers.

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2. BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON NATIONAL PARK

FEE: $15/VEHICLE | SIZE: 30,750 ACRES | 2014 VISITORS: 183,045

ARIZONA'S GRAND CANYON is indisputably so, yet Colorado's Black Canyon bests it on several counts. For starters, it's narrower. Instead of slouching away from the rims to the river bottom, Black Canyon's imposing granite walls stand straight along the Gunnison, with as little as 1,100 feet separating them. Your pulse can't help but quicken as you stand at Chasm View and watch the ground plunge away into a gorge so deep and dramatic, it seems like a Tolkien fantasy. Sunshine rarely angles inside, which is why it's called Black Canyon.

The Gunnison sees a scant fraction of the boats that ply the Colorado, because only expert paddlers can run its pinched and cliffy rapids. Hiking routes to the river are steep (and lined with poison ivy), so many more anglers talk about this park's fabled trout fishing than actually exploit it. The most popular path into the canyon (the milelong Gunnison Route) makes the Grand Canyon's Bright Angel Trail feel like an interstate highway. Visitors find that Black Canyon of the Gunnison preserves opportunities for discovery that are harder to come by at other parks.

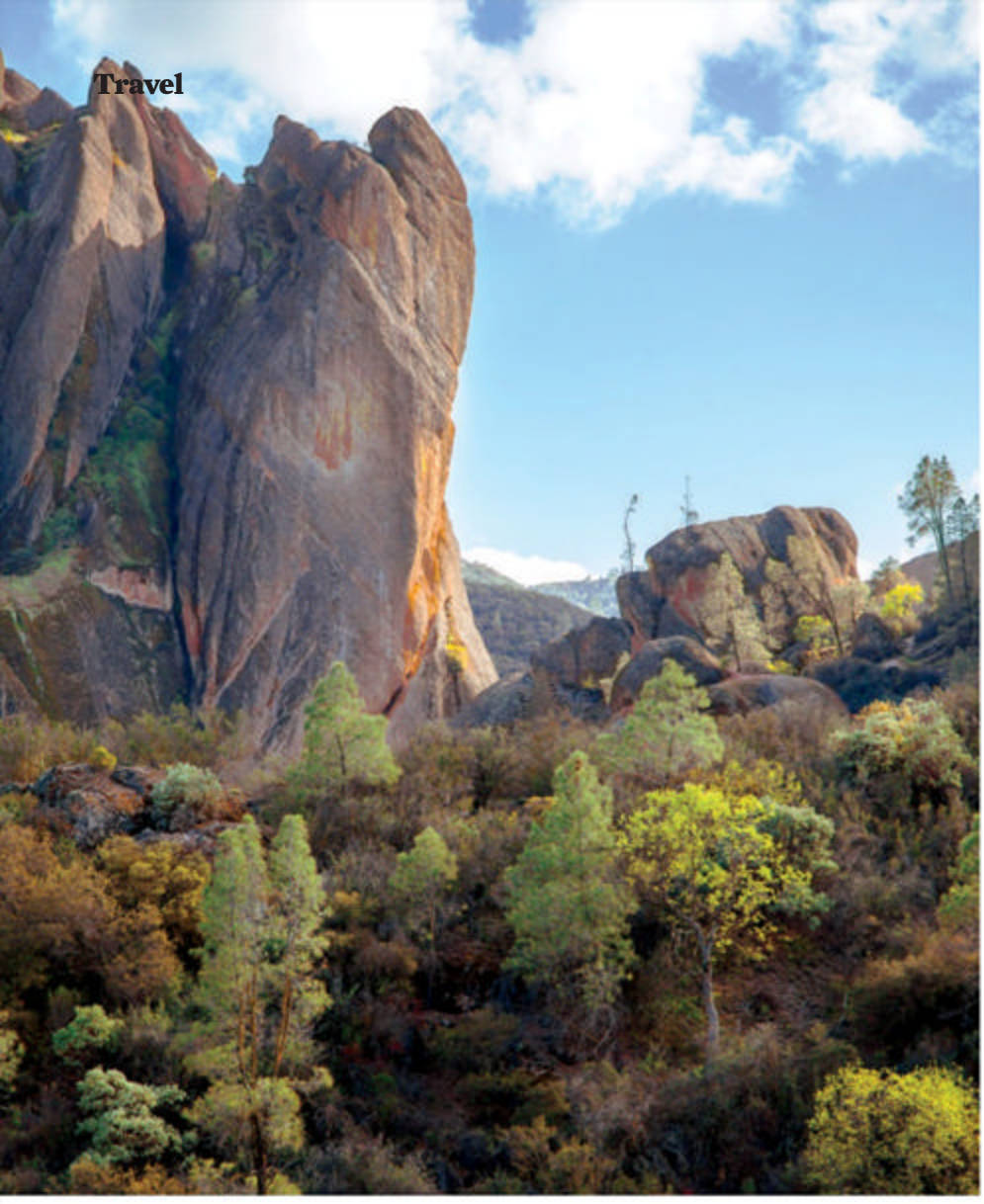
Even the scenic drives and view points feel low-key. Most visitors stick to the South Rim Road, although you'll still enjoy plenty of elbow room as you admire the bold pink ribbons of pegmatite that striate the canyon's cliffs from Painted Wall View. And the North Rim offers even more serenity and astounding vistas from Chasm View and The Narrows View. From late November through early April, cross-country skiers and snowshoers can stride across closed roads to admire canyon cliffs delineated by snow. *—Kelly Bastone*

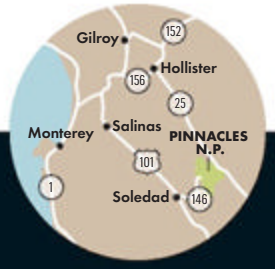
GETTING HERE
From Denver, take I-70 west, State 141 south, and U.S. 50 south to Montrose, the park's gateway city. The South Rim is 15 miles from Montrose. *nps.gov/blca.*

BEST TIME TO GO
Visit in late spring for mild-weather hiking. Try the 2-mile Oak Flat Loop Trail, which allows you to go below the rim without requiring you to go all the way down to the river. The path will take you past namesake oaks as well as aspen and Douglas fir.

WHERE TO STAY
South Rim Campground has 88 campsites, including some that are secluded. *From $12; reserve at recreation.gov.*
In Crested Butte, Purple Mountain Bed & Breakfast offers sumptuous bedding, complimentary craft beer tastings, and a gourmet breakfast spread. *From $109; 2-night min.; purplemountainlodge.com.*

JUSTIN BAILIE/TANDEM STOCK





GETTING HERE
From the San Francisco Bay Area, take U.S. 101 south, State 25 south (41 miles), and State 146 west 0.2 miles to the eastern entrance. From Los Angeles, take U.S. 101 north to Soledad and then exit onto State 146 east. Drive 10 miles to the park's western entrance. (The western and eastern entrances aren't linked within the park.) *nps.gov/pinn*.

BEST TIME TO GO
Right now—at the peak of the wildflower bloom, and before the brutal heat of summer. Among the 654 flowering plants in the park: bush lupine, California poppies, fiesta flowers, Johnny-jump-ups, monkey flower, and scarlet woolly Indian paintbrush.

WHERE TO STAY
The park has a single campground at the eastern entrance (blessedly, with a pool) with 134 camping and RV sites. The outlying towns of Hollister on the eastern side and Soledad, King City, and Salinas on the western side have motels.

3. PINNACLES NATIONAL PARK

FEE: $10/VEHICLE | SIZE: 26,648 ACRES | 2014 VISITORS: 196,635

PINNACLES, OUR NEWEST NATIONAL PARK, has always attracted those who look at its volcanic badlands and see possibilities rather than tectonic cataclysm. In the 19th century, its eerie spires and cream-colored palisades caught the attention of legendary bandit Tiburcio Vasquez, who thought the area's talus caves were the perfect place to avoid the long arm of the law. Today, the fantastical formations that give the park its name provide a hideout for a completely different kind of scavenger: the California condor.

In 1987, the last wild condor was captured and placed in a captive breeding program that has proven hugely successful. There are now about 220 of these heartstopping raptors flying free in Arizona, Baja, and California, including 25 at Pinnacles. Their 9½-foot wingspan is the largest of any bird in North America. Your best chance to spot these carrion-feeding critters is when they're soaring along the ridgeline above the Pinnacles Campground and over the High Peaks formation near Bear Gulch.

At 26,648 acres, the park is tiny by Western standards (Death Valley has 3.4 million acres; Yosemite, 761,266). But it still finds room for five distinct habitats—chaparral, woodlands, riparian, rock and scree, and grasslands. The varied terrain, the proximity to the Bay Area, and the annual explosion of wildflowers make the park a magnet for savvy day-hikers and birders. Trails range from the easy half-mile stroll from the Bear Gulch Day Use Area to the nearby Bear Gulch Cave, to the ambitious 9.3-mile High Peaks loop that hits many of the park highlights. Bring a flashlight for the caves and binoculars for the birds, including quail, acorn woodpeckers, wild turkeys, and the marquee condors. *—Bruce Anderson*

DIGITAL BONUS Explore more of the West's best national parks with our travel guides: *sunset.com/parks*.

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DISCOVER

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1. Boeger Winery, in the heart of the Sierra Foothills. **2.** High Hill Ranch's fishing pond. **3.** The Gold Rush salad at Cozmic Café. **4.** Old building finds new use on Main Street. **5.** Specialty meat selection at The Farm Table.

3

4

5

A PERFECT DAY IN

PLACERVILLE

The gold may be long gone, but an up-and-coming food and wine scene makes this Sierra Foothills town worth mining. *By Alexandra Deabler*

The gold standard breakfast

Back when Placerville was in the middle of the Mother Lode, the town was a hodgepodge of bars, brothels, and factories. Many of Main Street's original buildings remain intact, including the two-story cobblestone Placerville Soda Works, now the **Cozmic Café**, home to dharma talks, open-mic jams, and the healthiest breakfast menu in town: tofu scrambles with portabella mushrooms, and breakfast burritos wrapped in organic sprouted-grain tortillas. Take your fresh-squeezed beet juice to one of the hidden nooks in the back of the cafe, which are said to lead to a series of underground mining tunnels. The calories come more quickly at **Sweetie Pies'** across the street, a brunch hangout known for its olallieberry obsession—they use it to make everything from muffins and pies to house-jarred syrups. *Cozmic: $; 594 Main St.; ourcoz.com. Sweetie: $; 577 Main; sweetiepies.biz.* →

Photographs by DAVID FENTON

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the easy drinking Easy Jack was easy to brew. Just take our beloved Union Jack, subtract some ABV, and call it a Session IPA, right? Hardly. Brewmaster Matt Brynildson literally trekked three continents to source the hops so Easy Jack could deliver globe-spinning hop aromas, a signature malt balance and an empty glass before you knew what hit you. Drink Easy, Jack.

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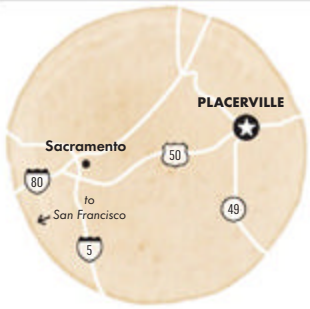

GETTING HERE
Placerville is 44 miles east of Sacramento on U.S. 50, and 130 miles northeast of San Francisco via I-80 and U.S. 50.

Eat your fudge, drink your wine

On the eastern edge of town, **Fudge Factory Farm** lies among some 20 orchards. Most of the U-pick farms close to visitors when the apples stop dropping at the end of autumn, but triple-F keeps 'em coming all year with homemade peanut brittle and 75 flavors of fudge, including thick blocks of peanut butter and chocolate swirl, best savored at nearby High Hill Ranch's fishing pond. Down the road, **Boeger Winery** sits smack in the middle of 85 acres of Sierra Foothills grapevines. Tour the winery, then settle in the remodeled tasting room with crisp complimentary Barbera. *Fudge: 2860 High Hill Rd.; fudgefactoryfarm.com. Wine: 1709 Carson Rd.; boegerwinery.com.*

Strike oil

You don't have to be an enophile to spend the day slipping in and out of tasting rooms. At **Winterhill**, "the oils are the star of the show," says Annette Schoonover, owner of the olive-oil tasting bar and shop, where you can choose from about 10 cold-pressed selections to sample, all sourced from orchards in El Dorado County. Nearby, **Dedrick's Cheese** hosts daily tastings from its array of 200-plus cheeses. The knowledgeable staff is quick with recommendations, but in a pinch, try the house favorite P'tit Basque, a delicate and mild sheep's-milk cheese with subtle nuttiness. You won't even miss the Pinot. *Winterhill: 321 Main; winterhillfarms.com. Dedrick's: 312 Main; dedrickscheese.com.*

Wares from everywhere

Amid the cluster of antiques stores on Main Street, new **Eco Logical** is one of those earthy-crunchy indie shops where the staff is friendly, the inventory is fair trade, and world music wafts from hidden speakers. Handwoven hammocks from Mexico hang beside displays of South African jewelry and shelves packed with organic soaps and candles. Up the block, you'll find **Placerville Hardware**, the oldest hardware store west of the Mississippi. The 6,000-square-foot space is part gift shop, part hammer-and-nails hardware store. That means you might uncover everything from a traditional gold-panning sluice box and miniature soufflé dishes to the latest toaster models. As employee Sara Rebolcaba puts it, "You know that saying, 'We've got everything you need and more'? Well, that's us." *Eco Logical: 320 Main; ecologicalstore.com. Hardware: 441 Main; placervillehardware.com.*

The best new restaurant in town

Over the past few years, Main Street's food scene has been improving, one locally sourced eatery at a time. New kid on the block, **The Farm Table**, opened last year after winning over farmers'-market fans with its dried-cured bacon. "We try to keep it local, pooling a majority of our produce from El Dorado County and the Sacramento Valley," says co-owner Kara Taylor, who runs the deli/sit-down restaurant with her husband. The walk-up counter lays out a daily spread of treats like brie-and-ham sandwiches and a charcuterie platter with house-cured chicken liver pâté and Cajun-spiced tasso, while the mezzanine level delights diners with cassoulet, flageolet beans stewed with ham, bacon, and duck confit, and up-close views of downtown. *$$; 311 Main; ourfarmtable.com.*

THE LOCAL LOWDOWN

"When I first got here, you couldn't get a fresh loaf of bread. We had no choice but to create the food scene we wanted."

—MARY FRANCES DEDRICK, OWNER, DEDRICK'S CHEESE

6

7

8

9

6. Happy hour at Cozmic Café. **7.** Olive oils at Winterhill are infused with everything from blood orange to jalapeño. **8.** The Farm Table's famous charcuterie plate. **9.** Handwoven baskets at Eco Logical.

MAP: MARGARET SLOAN

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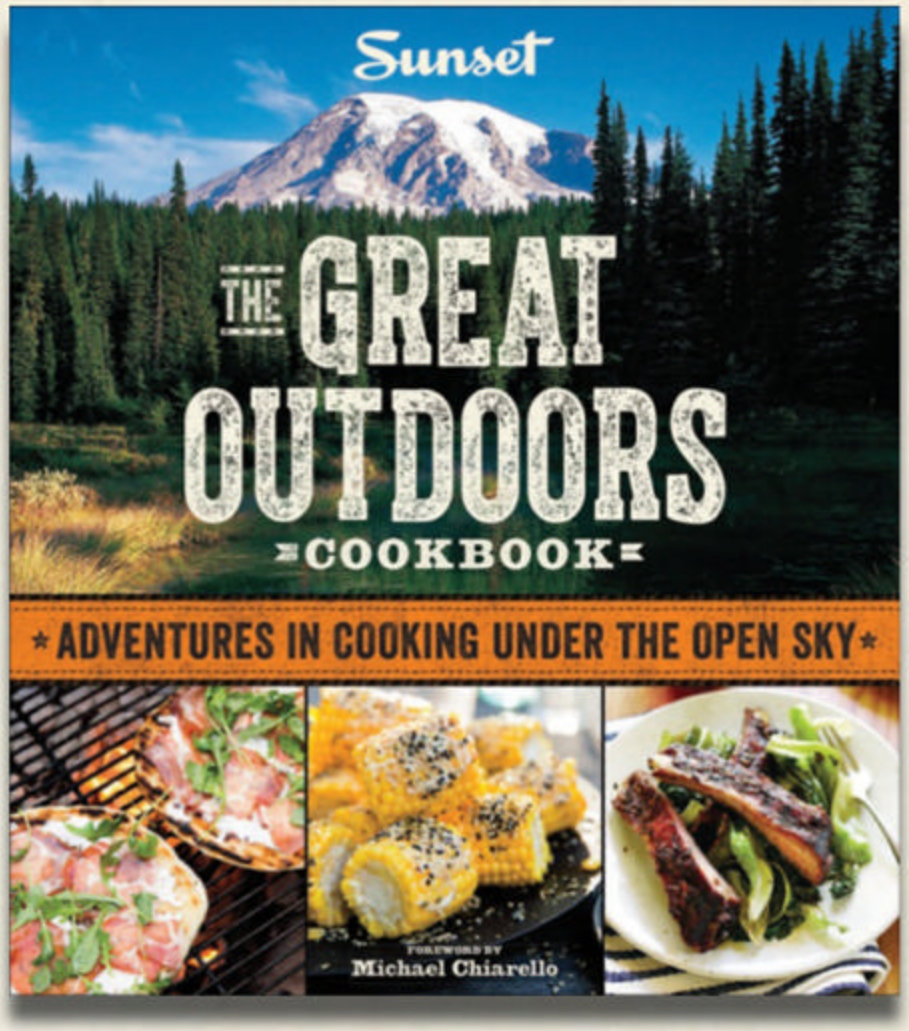

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Cook in Nature's Kitchen

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BEFORE & AFTER

SURFACE SMARTS

See how this designer updated her home with fabric and paint—no reno required.

PROP STYLING: CHAR LANGOS

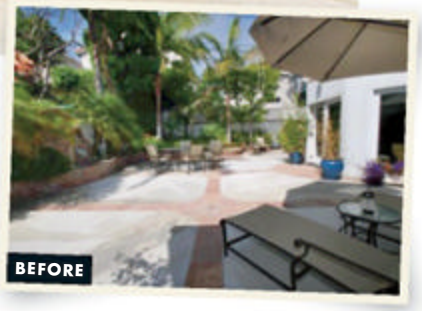
Photographs by THOMAS J. STORY

When interior designer Jill Soderlund and her husband, Clark, bought their house in Manhattan Beach, California, four years ago, it was a time capsule—and not in a good way. The home had been untouched ever since it was built in 1987. "Everything was pink tile, oak woodwork, wall-to-wall green carpet, brass fixtures," she says. The draw? The place sat on two lots, while most spots in the town claim only one, and the floor plan included five bedrooms—meaning Sophia, 14, and twins Audrey and William, 11, could each have a private space. Soderlund immediately got to work. "I wanted to change everything. Every finish. Every wall," she says. "But none of that was structural, so it seemed like it would be easy to fix." She was right. Little by little, her cosmetic updates turned the ode to the '80s house into a casual, colorful family home.

By SARA MORROW

OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM

Concrete and flagstone used to dominate the backyard. Soderlund replaced the stone with artificial turf to add green, and installed an L-shaped concrete bench and firepit. When she and her husband entertain, they open the French doors in the living and family rooms, and the yard becomes an extension of the house.



DINING ROOM

"The formal dining room was such a traditional space. I wanted to make it a little more modern," says Soderlund. She painted wide stripes along the walls to achieve that look, while beefing up the existing chair rail with trim and panels for balance. The previous owner's sturdy caned oak chairs stayed but got a facelift: "Spraying them with a white lacquer just brought them alive." She pulled the seats around a table she'd owned for years (it had been black, but she painted it white for this space) and added an offbeat chandelier. **PAINT (ON WALL):** Whitall Brown HC-69, Benjamin Moore; Chantilly Lace OC-65, Benjamin Moore. **CHANDELIER:** Meurice chandelier, Jonathan Adler.

BEFORE
Boring and beige

THE FIX
Wallpaper brings the drama

MASTER BEDROOM

Soderlund created an accent wall with wallpaper, then added to the drama by surrounding it with deep gray paint. A white headboard and bedding, along with beige carpet, provide visual relief. Since the room is large, Soderlund layered a nubby gray rug over the carpet to anchor the sleeping area. **WALLPAPER:** Imperial Trellis in Charcoal, Schumacher. **PAINT:** Steel Wool 2121-20, Benjamin Moore.

DIGITAL BONUS
Home editor Joanna Linberg shares tips for painting furniture, using wall stencils, and more: *sunset.com/painting101*.

DECK

DECKED OUT

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DECKING | RAILING | LIGHTING | FASTENING

BEFORE
A sectional in a sea of green carpet

THE FIX
Multiple sofas and a fireplace makeover

FAMILY ROOM

Casual comfort rules in the family room, where Soderlund modernized the brick fireplace with white paint. She also added another window—expanding the near-panoramic view of the backyard—next to the hearth, to make the space feel even airier. And although this is the only room with a TV, it's not the focal point: Two beige linen sofas, along with a pair of custom lounge chairs, face off over the reclaimed-wood coffee table. "I love the symmetry in there," she says.

READING AREA

"The way the house is built, the upstairs landing is nearly the size of a bedroom," says Soderlund, who took advantage of the space by carving out a reading alcove. She added a built-in bench, bookended the corner with storage, and decorated in a blue-and-pink color scheme that appeals equally to (from left) Sophia, William, and Audrey. "It really warms up the landing," Soderlund says. "It's such a great spot for hanging out with a book or chatting on the phone." **WALLPAPER:** Extra Fine Arrowroot in Coral Red, Phillip Jeffries. **THROW PILLOWS:** Indian Pink Pillows.

BEFORE
Wasted space

THE FIX
Built-ins create a new room

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BEFORE
Color in all the wrong places

THE FIX
One big hit of color

BREAKFAST NOOK

The dining nook required only a few fresh coats of paint (light gray on the walls, white on the trim and tray ceiling). "That alone completely updated the space," Soderlund says. The neutral backdrop set the scene for a big color moment: unexpectedly orange bamboo and rattan chairs. **PAINT (ON WALL):** Miner's Dust DEC-786, Dunn-Edwards. **CHAIRS:** Indochine side chairs in a custom color, Red Egg.

Kick back, relax and enjoy the gorgeous fragrance of our easy growing **'Sweet Summer Love' Clematis.** Visit us at provenwinners-shrubs.com.

LIVING ROOM

The home's front door opens into the living room, where Soderlund bucked tradition. "I wanted it to feel a little more formal than the family room, but with some funk," she explains. She started with a splash of white on the fireplace and mantel, and a custom-mixed sky blue for the walls. Against that backdrop, she threw in a pair of zebra ottomans and re-covered the settee with an orange paisley to loosen things up. The white slipcovered chairs are enlivened by embroidered accent pillows and a striped runner underneath. **SETTEE:** Campaign daybed, Palecek. **CARPET:** Beach natural jute rug, Merida Meridian.

TRIFEXIS®
(spinosad + milbemycin oxime)
Chewable Tablets

Caution: Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Before using TRIFEXIS chewable tablets, please consult the product insert, a summary of which follows:

Indications:
TRIFEXIS is indicated for the prevention of heartworm disease (*Dirofilaria immitis*). TRIFEXIS kills fleas and is indicated for the prevention and treatment of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), and the treatment and control of adult hookworm (*Ancylostoma caninum*), adult roundworm (*Toxocara canis* and *Toxascaris leonina*) and adult whipworm (*Trichuris vulpis*) infections in dogs and puppies 8 weeks of age or older and 5 pounds of body weight or greater.

Dosage and Administration:
TRIFEXIS is given orally, once a month at the minimum dosage of 13.5 mg/lb (30 mg/kg) spinosad and 0.2 mg/lb (0.5 mg/kg) milbemycin oxime body weight. For heartworm prevention, give once monthly for at least 3 months after exposure to mosquitoes (see **EFFECTIVENESS**).

Contraindications:
There are no known contraindications to the use of TRIFEXIS.

Warnings:
Not for human use. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children.
Serious adverse reactions have been reported following concomitant extra-label use of ivermectin with spinosad alone, a component of TRIFEXIS (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**).

Precautions:
Treatment with fewer than 3 monthly doses after the last exposure to mosquitoes may not provide complete heartworm prevention (see **EFFECTIVENESS**).

Prior to administration of TRIFEXIS, dogs should be tested for existing heartworm infection. At the discretion of the veterinarian, infected dogs should be treated with an adulticide to remove adult heartworms. TRIFEXIS is not effective against adult *D. immitis*. While the number of circulating microfilariae may decrease following treatment, TRIFEXIS is not indicated for microfilariae clearance.

Mild, transient hypersensitivity reactions manifested as labored respiration, vomiting, salivation and lethargy, have been noted in some dogs treated with milbemycin oxime carrying a high number of circulating microfilariae. These reactions are presumably caused by release of protein from dead or dying microfilariae.

Use with caution in breeding females. The safe use of TRIFEXIS in breeding males has not been evaluated.

Use with caution in dogs with pre-existing epilepsy (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**).

Puppies less than 14 weeks of age may experience a higher rate of vomiting.

Adverse Reactions:
In a well-controlled US field study, which included a total of 352 dogs (176 treated with TRIFEXIS and 176 treated with an active control), no serious adverse reactions were attributed to administration of TRIFEXIS. All reactions were regarded as mild.

Over the 180-day study period, all observations of potential adverse reactions were recorded. Reactions that occurred at an incidence >1% (average monthly rate) within any of the 6 months of observation are presented in the following table. The most frequently reported adverse reaction in dogs in the TRIFEXIS group was vomiting.

Average Monthly Rate (%) of Dogs with Adverse Reactions

Adverse Reaction	TRIFEXIS Chewable Tablets*	Active Control Tablets*
Vomiting	6.13	3.08
Pruritus	4.00	4.81
Lethargy	2.63	1.54
Diarrhea	2.25	1.54
Dermatitis	1.47	1.45
Skin Reddening	1.37	1.26
Decreased appetite	1.27	1.35
Pinnal Reddening	1.18	0.87

*n=176 dogs

In the US field study, one dog administered TRIFEXIS experienced a single mild seizure 2 ½ hours after receiving the second monthly dose. The dog remained enrolled and received four additional monthly doses after the event and completed the study without further incident.

Following concomitant extra-label use of ivermectin with spinosad alone, a component of TRIFEXIS, some dogs have experienced the following clinical signs: *trembling/twitching, salivation/drooling, seizures, ataxia, mydriasis, blindness and disorientation*. Spinosad alone has been shown to be safe when administered concurrently with heartworm preventatives at label directions.

In US and European field studies, no dogs experienced seizures when dosed with spinosad alone at the therapeutic dose range of 13.5-27.3 mg/lb (30-60 mg/kg), including 4 dogs with pre-existing epilepsy. Four epileptic dogs that received higher than the maximum recommended dose of 27.3 mg/lb (60 mg/kg) experienced at least one seizure within the week following the second dose of spinosad, but no seizures following the first and third doses. The cause of the seizures observed in the field studies could not be determined.

For technical assistance or to report suspected adverse drug events, contact Elanco Animal Health at 1-888-545-5973. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth

Post Approval Experience (Mar 2012):
The following adverse reactions are based on post-approval adverse drug event reporting. The adverse reactions are listed in decreasing order of frequency: vomiting, depression/lethargy, pruritus, anorexia, diarrhea, trembling/shaking, ataxia, seizures, hypersalivation, and skin reddening.

Effectiveness:
Heartworm Prevention:
In a well-controlled laboratory study, TRIFEXIS was 100% effective against induced heartworm infections when administered for 3 consecutive monthly doses. Two consecutive monthly doses did not provide 100% effectiveness against heartworm infection. In another well-controlled laboratory study, a single dose of TRIFEXIS was 100% effective against induced heartworm infections.

In a well-controlled six month US field study conducted with TRIFEXIS, no dogs were positive for heartworm infection as determined by heartworm antigen testing performed at the end of the study and again three months later.

Flea Treatment and Prevention:
In a well-controlled laboratory study, TRIFEXIS demonstrated 100% effectiveness on the first day following treatment and 100% effectiveness on Day 30. In a well-controlled laboratory study, spinosad, a component of TRIFEXIS, began to kill fleas 30 minutes after administration and demonstrated 100% effectiveness within 4 hours. Spinosad, a component of TRIFEXIS, kills fleas before they can lay eggs. If a severe environmental infestation exists, fleas may persist for a period of time after dose administration due to the emergence of adult fleas from pupae already in the environment. In field studies conducted in households with existing flea infestations of varying severity, flea reductions of 98.0% to 99.8% were observed over the course of 3 monthly treatments with spinosad alone. Dogs with signs of flea allergy dermatitis showed improvement in erythema, papules, scaling, alopecia, dermatitis/pyodermatitis and pruritus as a direct result of eliminating the fleas.

Treatment and Control of Intestinal Nematode Infections:
In well-controlled laboratory studies, TRIFEXIS was ≥ 90% effective in removing naturally and experimentally induced adult roundworm, whipworm and hookworm infections.

Palatability:
TRIFEXIS is a flavored chewable tablet. In a field study of client-owned dogs where 175 dogs were each offered TRIFEXIS once a month for 6 months, dogs voluntarily consumed 64% of the doses when offered plain as if a treat, and 33% of the doses when offered in or on food. The remaining 13% of doses were administered like other tablet medications.

NADA 141-321, Approved by the FDA

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: Serious adverse reactions have been reported following concomitant extra-label use of ivermectin with spinosad, one of the components of Trifexis. Treatment with fewer than three monthly doses after the last exposure to mosquitoes may not provide complete heartworm prevention. Prior to administration of Trifexis, dogs should be tested for existing heartworm infection. Use with caution in dogs with pre-existing epilepsy. The most common adverse reactions reported are vomiting, depression, and itching. To ensure heartworm prevention, observe your dog for one hour after administration. If vomiting occurs within an hour, redose with another full dose. Puppies less than 14 weeks of age may experience a higher rate of vomiting. For product information, see previous page.

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Available through your veterinarian

To learn more visit trifexis.com

Elanco

THE WIRED HOME

With just a few upgrades, your house can be ready for the future.
By John Patrick Pullen

YOU'VE PROBABLY BEEN HEARING about smart home technology for years—the lights that awaken when you pull into the driveway, the dead bolt that springs open as you reach the door—but it's only recently that these items have become truly user-friendly and, well, smart. If you're thinking of upgrading your home, here are your best bets. All of them are easy to use, function without requiring rewiring of your house (but can also play well with other tech), and are affordable. Most important, these gadgets solve real problems—so much so that after a few weeks of living with one of them, it will feel like a necessity, not a novelty.

UPGRADE EXTERIOR LIGHTS

Most porch lights require bulbs that aren't smart yet. But as long as they're on a switch, it won't matter—you can power them with the **WeMo Light Switch**. This Wi-Fi–connected switch lets you program any bulb to come on at a particular time. For instance, set it to turn on 15 minutes before sunset, and you'll never have to worry about a dark house when you travel. *$50; wemothat.com.*

STEP UP YOUR SMOKE ALARM

Smoke detectors don't stop fires; people do. **Leeo**, an LED night-light programmed to listen for your alarms, will call your phone if the sirens go off. And if you don't answer the call, Leeo can be set to contact your neighbor of choice. *$99; leeo.com.*

WATCH WHEN YOU'RE AWAY

Web security cameras typically just keep an eye out, but **Piper nv** has a 105-decibel siren that goes off while in "away" or "vacation" mode if its 180° lens detects intruders. It also tracks temperature, movement, and humidity, and connects to window and door sensors. But the biggest innovation might be ditching a monthly subscription-based security system. *$269; getpiper.com.*

DETECT AND PROTECT

A carbon monoxide detector that moonlights as a night-light, **American Red Cross by Etón Blackout Buddy CO** makes audible and flashing alerts when the odorless gas is present. And if the power goes out, the plug-in automatically turns on, becoming a removable LED flashlight. *$60; etoncorp.com.*

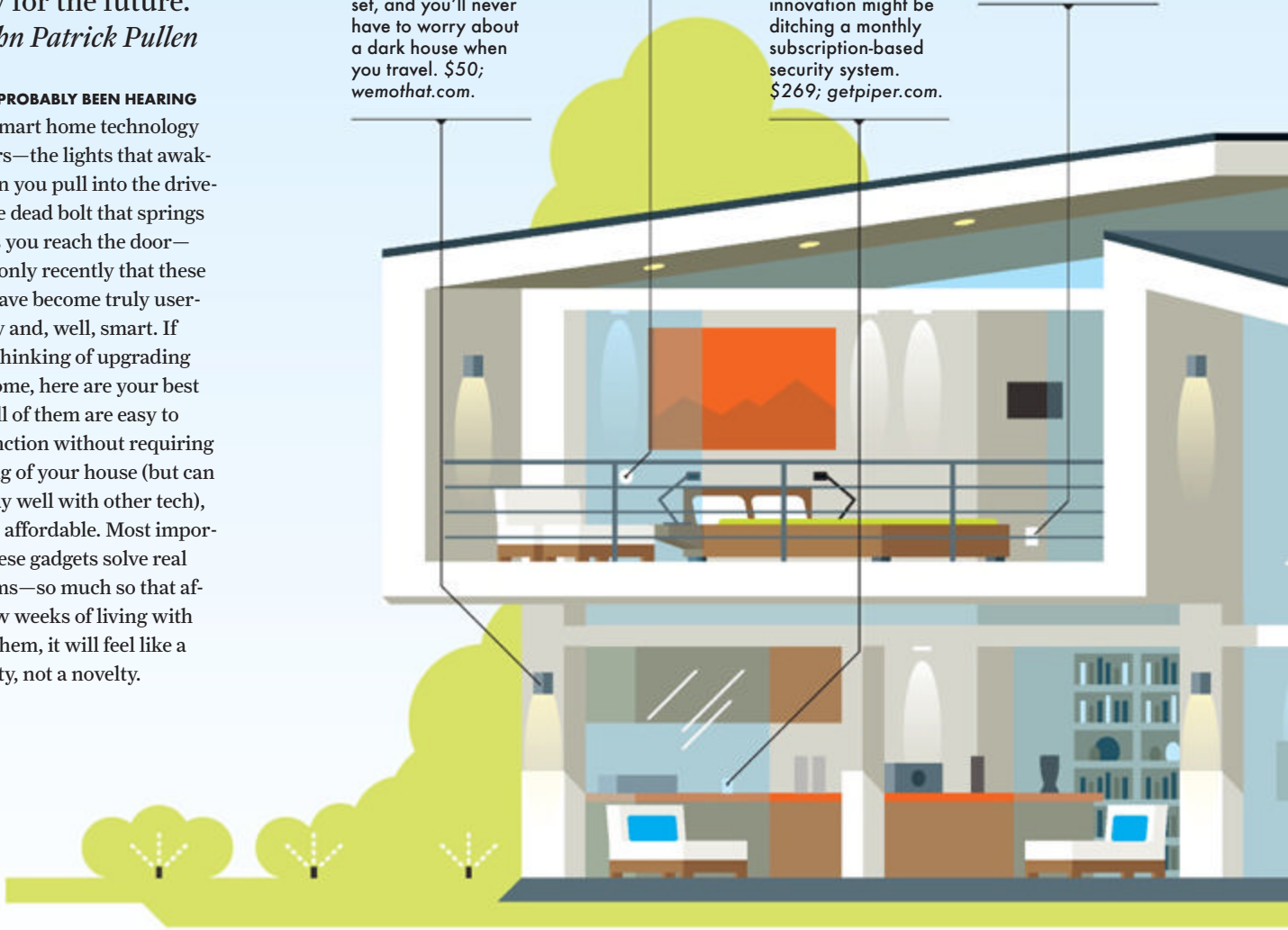
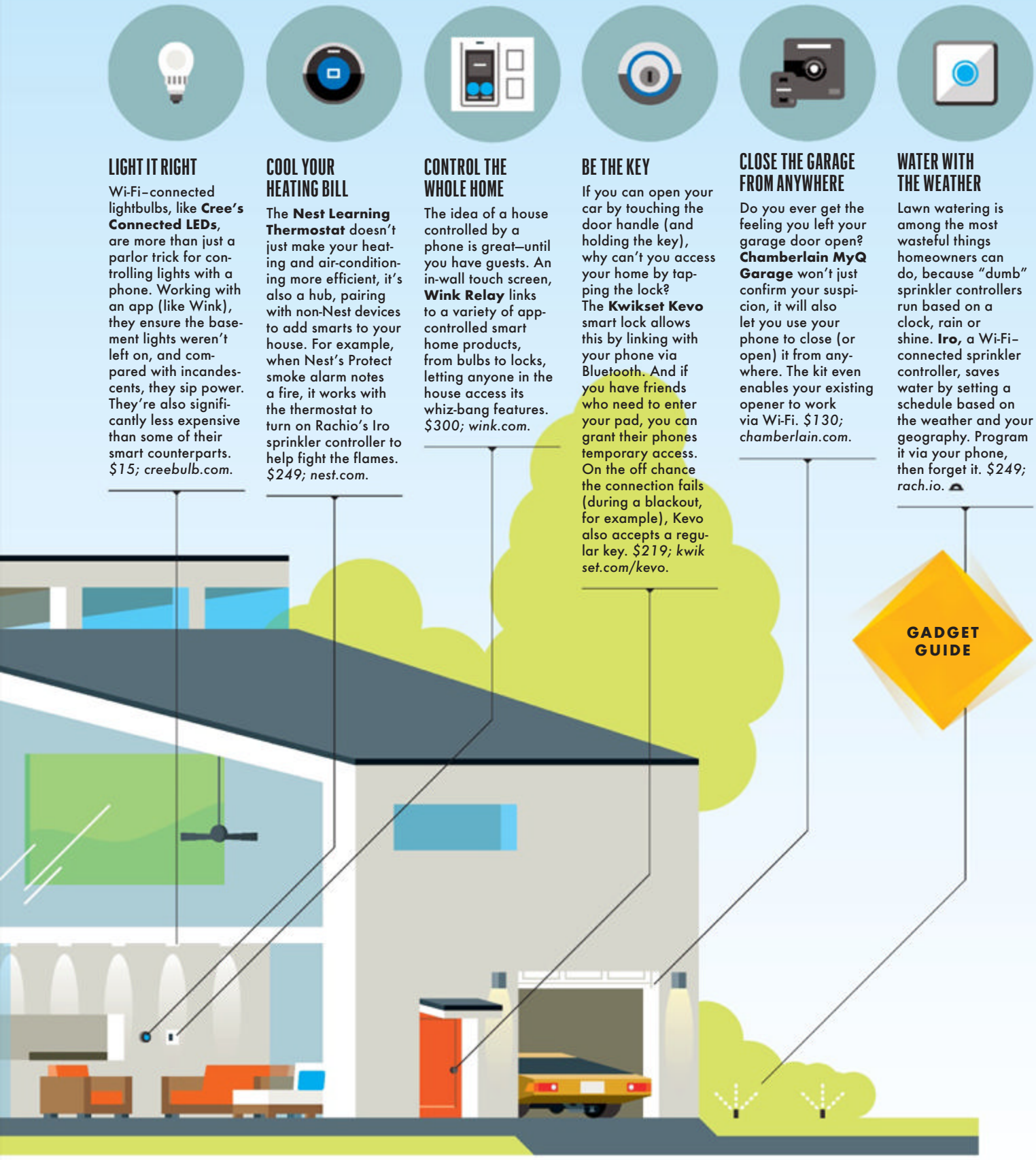


Illustration by L-DOPA



LIGHT IT RIGHT

Wi-Fi–connected lightbulbs, like **Cree's Connected LEDs**, are more than just a parlor trick for controlling lights with a phone. Working with an app (like Wink), they ensure the basement lights weren't left on, and compared with incandescents, they sip power. They're also significantly less expensive than some of their smart counterparts. *$15; creebulb.com.*

COOL YOUR HEATING BILL

The **Nest Learning Thermostat** doesn't just make your heating and air-conditioning more efficient, it's also a hub, pairing with non-Nest devices to add smarts to your house. For example, when Nest's Protect smoke alarm notes a fire, it works with the thermostat to turn on Rachio's Iro sprinkler controller to help fight the flames. *$249; nest.com.*

CONTROL THE WHOLE HOME

The idea of a house controlled by a phone is great—until you have guests. An in-wall touch screen, **Wink Relay** links to a variety of app-controlled smart home products, from bulbs to locks, letting anyone in the house access its whiz-bang features. *$300; wink.com.*

BE THE KEY

If you can open your car by touching the door handle (and holding the key), why can't you access your home by tapping the lock? The **Kwikset Kevo** smart lock allows this by linking with your phone via Bluetooth. And if you have friends who need to enter your pad, you can grant their phones temporary access. On the off chance the connection fails (during a blackout, for example), Kevo also accepts a regular key. *$219; kwikset.com/kevo.*

CLOSE THE GARAGE FROM ANYWHERE

Do you ever get the feeling you left your garage door open? **Chamberlain MyQ Garage** won't just confirm your suspicion, it will also let you use your phone to close (or open) it from anywhere. The kit even enables your existing opener to work via Wi-Fi. *$130; chamberlain.com.*

WATER WITH THE WEATHER

Lawn watering is among the most wasteful things homeowners can do, because "dumb" sprinkler controllers run based on a clock, rain or shine. **Iro,** a Wi-Fi–connected sprinkler controller, saves water by setting a schedule based on the weather and your geography. Program it via your phone, then forget it. *$249; rach.io.*

GADGET GUIDE

GARDEN TREND

LOCAL HEROES

Native plants save you water—and rescue your garden from blandness. By Johanna Silver

WHEN GARDEN DESIGNER Lauren Springer Ogden moved from Philadelphia to Colorado, she headed straight for Rocky Mountain National Park, where she lay down in an alpine meadow covered in blue phlox. "Everything was blooming," she says. "It was like *The Sound of Music*." When she moved into her house, in Fort Collins, Colorado, Springer Ogden got to work designing the garden with plants endemic to the region. "I like wild places, and I'm always trying to create something inspired by what I've seen in nature."

Springer Ogden is one of a growing number of garden designers embracing native plants. The reasons are as much practical as they are aesthetic. Natives are natural survivors. In the Northwest, these plants have evolved to handle not only lots of rain, but also dry conditions in summer. In the Rockies, some alpine species of natives thrive at 14,000 feet. And many plants from California and the Southwest have adapted to long periods of drought. "Why mess around with plants that you have to try to keep alive?" says Phoenix landscape architect Steve Martino. "Natives just fit."

Lewisia cotyledon **is native to Northern California and Southern Oregon.**

JOHN GRANEN

The definition of a native plant is up for some debate. More

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persnickety types define "native" as any plant that's endemic to a 5-mile radius of your home. ("That's like marrying your cousin," says Springer Ogden.) But most experts consider a native to be any plant that grew in America before mass European expansion, and they say that choosing a plant based on the type of region it evolved in (coastal bluffs, alpine ranges) is more important than state boundaries.

In any case, these plants are long overdue for a public-image rehab. When Martino started designing gardens in the 1970s, he had to work hard to convince clients to plant natives. "Homeowners just wanted whatever they grew up with," he says. "They thought desert plants looked too dry." Today, the lack of plant diversity at big-box stores means that many yards can still look as homogeneous as the pit stops along highways. "I find myself driving through neighborhoods in Southern California, thinking: I could be anywhere," says David Fross, founder of Native Sons Nursery in Arroyo Grande, California.

But with recurring droughts, the tide is finally changing. Native-plant nurseries report that sales are up, and native-plant societies are seeing their memberships grow. "There's a whole philosophical shift," Fross says. "We need to start moving away from overly irrigated, always-green landscapes." Natives can take some getting used to, particularly in drier regions, where they go dormant during the summer months. But there is beauty in dormancy, says Fross. "I love to watch the *Eriogonum* seeds deepen into their rust color against gray foliage and grasses."

Something else almost miraculous happens once you plant a native garden. Birds, bees, and other insects—often natives themselves—show up. "Native plants can be a window to this parallel universe of pollinators," says Martino. "I planted a *Conoclinium greggii* 'Boothill', and I swear that masses of queen butterflies—a native I've never seen in 30 years of living here—appeared out of nowhere." Experts confirm that these kinds of gardens make a significant difference. "In an era when we're doing so much development, native gardens provide corridors for plants and animals to survive," says Bart O'Brien, botanic garden manager for The Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Berkeley.

And although native gardens may have a reputation for being wild and unkempt, there's more room for design than gardeners might think. "Not every native garden has to replicate a natural habitat," says Jason Dewees, horticulturist at Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco. "The bees don't care if the plants are manicured or if they're planted as a billowy mass—they're still going to come."

Whether wild or manicured, a native garden creates a sense of place—as the examples on these pages show. As Springer Ogden puts it: "This is my piece of serenity in suburbia."

FORT COLLINS, CO

PLAINS SANCTUARY

Typically, when people want a wide-open space in their yard, they plant a lawn. But garden designer Lauren Springer Ogden had a different idea in mind: "I wanted something that didn't require a lot of water or fertilizer," she says. "I didn't want it to look domestic." This meadow changes beautifully with the seasons. When reflecting the moonlight in winter, it looks like snow. In the spring, the fescue and junegrass turn bluish green. By early summer, the warm-season grasses grow, and it's gray-green. "It's never emerald green like a lawn," says Springer Ogden. "It's more like a prairie."

THE PLANTS: The meadow includes blue grama grass *(Bouteloua gracilis)*, native fescues, and junegrass. Nearby is a ruby muhly *(Muhlenbergia reverchonii)* covered in pink flowers. Enclosing the space are trees such as dwarf Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens* 'Mesa Verde'), native hybrid Rocky Mountain birch (*Betula* x *hybrida* 'Rocky Mountain Splendor'), and a Wasatch maple (*Acer grandidentatum*) in full fall color.

"Every yard across the country shouldn't look the same. Native plants define what's unique about where you are."

—DAVID SALMAN, FOUNDER, HIGH COUNTRY GARDENS

D. A. HORCHNER

LOS ANGELES

COASTAL RETREAT

"When I got into landscape architecture, I decided that I was going to use my garden as a laboratory," says Tom Rau. Over the past three years, he's turned a typical urban front yard filled with shade and clay soil into a lush native garden reminiscent of a scene along a hiking trail. "The drought's been building for many years," he says. "This kind of landscaping helps us adapt."

THE PLANTS: Rau planted grassy *Carex texensis* between pavers, and clumps of *C. divulsa* and *C. pansa* on either side. The strappy leaves of a native iris grow at left, while a giant chain fern *(Woodwardia fimbriata)* stands tall at right. Pink flowers of *Heuchera* 'Wendy' appear in the foreground.

PARADISE VALLEY, AZ

DESERT DRAMA

"With just a few distinctive desert plants, you can evoke a sense of place," says Steve Martino, the landscape architect behind this Arizona backyard. To show off the plants' architectural shapes, he painted one wall red. He chose plants for brightness too. When the native mesquite tree's yellow flowers bloom in the spring, "the color knocks your eyes out," he says.

THE PLANTS: Three *Agave americana* hold their form year-round next to the Arizona mesquite *(Prosopis velutina)*. Below it, brittlebush *(Encelia farinosa)* leads the eye down the path with yellow blooms atop silvery foliage.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: THOMAS J. STORY; JOHN GRANEN; STEVEN A. GUNTHER

SHORELINE, WA

SUBURBAN WOODLAND

When Ellen Hauptmann and Dave Flotree started gardening at their home just outside Seattle 14 years ago, the total wildlife population consisted of two crows. Now, thanks to the native garden they planted on most of their one-third acre, they see chickadees, towhees, thrushes, finches, flickers, and even sharp-shinned hawks and great blue herons. "We really designed this garden for the birds," says Hauptmann. Twice a year, the couple head to the plant sale of the Washington Native Plant Society, bringing home plants typically found in redwood forests to refresh their yard.

THE PLANTS: The groundcover is redwood sorrel *(Oxalis oregana)*. Planted at center are vine maples *(Acer circinatum)* and Western sword ferns *(Polystichum munitum)*.

DIGITAL BONUS
Find 23 knockout native plants from around the West: *sunset.com/natives*.

In the SUNSET GARDEN

TIPS FROM OUR TEAM

FINDS OF THE MONTH

HOT SEATS

It's the time of year to move the party outside. Here are our favorite outdoor seats, all available from Tucson-based online shop Boxhill *(shopboxhill.com)*.

The Statement Piece The Vibrant Concha Chair *($450)* has a flat back and a weave that embraces your body. The chair is available in 11 colors, including purple, which especially pops next to greenery.

The Tough Beauty With a teak frame and a polyfiber weave that withstands sun and salt, the Tokio Teak Relaxing Chair *($669)* is practically bulletproof. Cluster a few around a low firepit.

The Chameleon The Wickham Dining Chair *($447)* pairs as well with a modern table as it does with a more rustic one. And even though the chair's made of steel, it's extremely comfortable.

PLANT NOW

Blooming onions

Rather than tossing out the 'Walla Walla Sweet' onions that had started sprouting in her fridge last spring, Test Garden design assistant Lauren Dunec Hoang planted them in a corner of the Test Garden veggie bed. By midsummer, the sprouts had grown into fully formed stems, each one topped with a fist-size flower. (For an edible crop, onions are usually planted from seed, often in the fall.) The surprising blooms were a great reminder that gardening is all about experimentation.

"Onion flowers look like pompoms on top of sturdy stems."

LAUREN DUNEC HOANG, TEST GARDEN DESIGN ASSISTANT

WEEKEND DIY

Try a new trellis

An A-frame trellis gives tomatoes or squash plenty of room to climb—and at the end of the season, can be folded flat for storage. Constructing one requires only some basic hardware-store supplies and an hour or so: Make the 8-foot-long frames from 2-by-2s. Reinforce the corners with metal braces, then link the two sections together with 3-inch cabinet hinges. Finally, use fence staples to attach 6-inch wire mesh to the frame.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LINDA LAMB PETERS (2); PORTRAIT: GLUEKIT; TRELLIS ILLUSTRATION: MARGARET SLOAN

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Your CHECKLIST

PLANT

Select azaleas and rhododendrons while they're in full bloom at nurseries. Some top-performing varieties for Northern California include magenta 'Anah Kruschke', peach-toned 'Percy Wiseman', and ruby-colored 'Taurus'.

Sow seeds of beans, corn, cucumbers, melons, and winter squash directly into the ground.

Set out tomato seedlings. To ensure deeply rooted and well-anchored plants, pinch off all but the top two pairs of leaves, then set the seedling at the bottom of a 1- to 2-foot hole. Backfill, keeping the top leaves above soil level.

Sow seeds of giant sunflowers in well-amended soil for summer color. Later in the season, leave spent blooms in place for birds.

For poolside landscaping, use plants that are soft to the touch and litter-free, such as cordyline, lamb's ears, and mat-rush *(Lomandra longifolia)*.

Add unthirsty California natives to your garden. Garden-friendly choices include California lilac *(Ceanothus)*, coffeeberry *(Rhamnus californica)*, monkey flower *(Mimulus)*, toyon *(Heteromeles arbutifolia)*, and white sage *(Salvia apiana)*.

For instant gratification, plant a modern, low-water container by pairing bold 'Blue Glow' agave with wiry, black-stemmed 'Quicksilver' hebe.

MAINTAIN

Handpick snails and slugs from the undersides of leaves and pots.

Mow lawns when soil is dry and leave clippings where they fall to help fertilize new growth.

Feed roses with a granular organic fertilizer intended for roses, or spray leaves with diluted fish emulsion.

Stop ants from climbing woody plants by placing sticky barriers around shrub and tree trunks at least 6 inches from the ground.

GO

Have the first pick of new offerings at Annie's Annuals & Perennials spring party. Choose from 2,000 plants, including many unusual heirlooms. *Apr 11–12; 740 Market Ave., Richmond, CA; anniesannuals.com.*

What grows in your climate zone? Find out at *sunset.com/zonefinder*.

SAXON HOLT/PHOTOBOTANIC

> *"Ornamental grasses and tidy perennials make for a surprisingly low-maintenance yard."*
>
> *JOHANNA SILVER,*
> *ASSOCIATE GARDEN EDITOR*

IDEA WE LOVE

Plant a pyramid

Rather than haul away a pile of earth in his Albion, California, front yard after excavating his home's foundation, nursery owner Gary Ratway decided to plant it. He shaped the mound into a pyramid, 5 feet high and 20 feet wide, then covered the surface with blue sedge *(Carex flacca),* whose roots prevent erosion. The garden gets its formal feel from hedges of 'Mrs. Reeds Dark Blue' rosemary and boxwood, as well as 12-foot-tall hornbeam trees *(Carpinus)* that are trained on bamboo stakes. Giant feather grass *(Stipa gigantea)* softens the border. **DESIGN:** Gary Ratway, Digging Dog Nursery, Albion, CA; *diggingdog.com*.

Reported by **LAUREN DUNEC HOANG**

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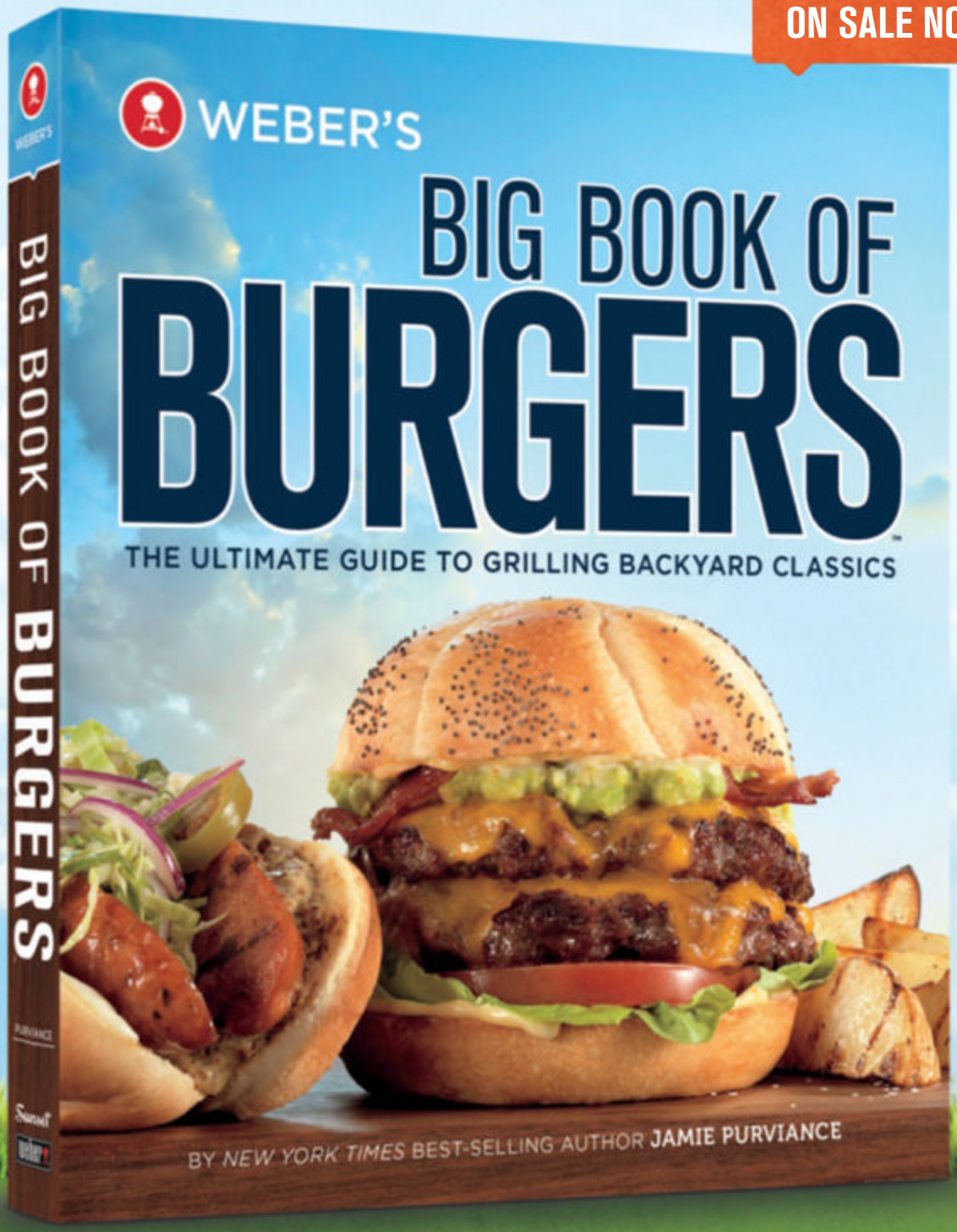

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Sunset

AVAILABLE WHEREVER BOOKS AND EBOOKS ARE SOLD

Design ideas that matter

From living buildings to upcycled trash, these eight innovations are shaping the West's future.

When we asked leaders and experts in green design to fill us in on how the field is changing, a theme quickly emerged: It's not only about sustainability, but also about resiliency—designing and building not just for the next 15 years, but the next 150. The innovators on the following pages—architects, designers, and developers—are crafting solutions with that long game in mind. Far from being daunted by the task, they're energized. "I see this as an opportunity, a chance to redesign the world," says architect Eric Corey Freed (you'll meet him on the next page). "I'm more excited and have more faith than ever." We think you'll agree.

BY JESS CHAMBERLAIN, MIRANDA CROWELL, JOANNA LINBERG, CAROL SHIH, JOHANNA SILVER / PORTRAIT ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOEL KIMMEL

FROM LEFT: MATTHEW MILLMAN, BENJAMIN BENSCHNEIDER

Buildings should produce their own energy.

THE INNOVATOR: ERIC COREY FREED, INTERNATIONAL LIVING FUTURE INSTITUTE

The typical new building is an energy glutton—and often leeches dangerous chemicals. Architect Eric Corey Freed says it's time for a reset. He and the team from Seattle's International Living Future Institute *(living-future.org)* developed the Living Building Challenge, a way-beyond-LEED certification that pushes buildings to give more back to the environment than they take. The requirements are stringent: Does the building produce more energy than it consumes? Reuse its water more than once? Is it free of unhealthy chemicals? To date, 241 buildings have met the challenge, but the impact reaches further. He talked to us about what's next.

How does the Living Building Challenge differ from other building standards?
Programs like LEED are wonderful except they promote a "less bad" approach. To develop the Living Building Challenge, we asked, where do buildings need to be? and set that as the bar. The beauty of the Challenge is its simplicity. A building either produces more energy than it consumes or it doesn't. Either you've avoided the "red list" of materials we don't allow or you haven't.

How is the Challenge making a difference beyond the buildings themselves?
It's interesting how these buildings incite change. For example, the wiring that was going into [Seattle's] Bullitt Center had a PVC covering, which is a red-list material. They went back to the manufacturer and said, "We want to use your wiring but can't if it has vinyl; can you make it without?" They did, and now they offer that product in their line.

You're launching the Living Product Challenge this month. What is that?
It's not just about a product's materials, but how much water is used in production, how much energy is used, what are the ethics of the company. The manufacturers in the pilot program are mainly building oriented since that's who we have relationships with, but I'd love to see electronics and cell phone and clothing people here.

How can the average person benefit from the work you're doing with these manufacturers?
Right now, we have a transparency program called Declare *(declareproducts.com)*. It asks if the manufacturer has any red-list materials in its product, and either you do or you don't. It's interesting that companies like Mohawk Group flooring are proudly stating this on their products. It makes consumers realize that carpet materials are a health concern.

Why is figuring out our building problem more urgent than, for instance, solving our auto addiction?
The good news is we already know how to make living buildings. We don't need to invent a crazy fuel cell. Based on existing technology, you can have a living building today.

We know how to build sustainable buildings, so why aren't we?
The defense is "We're not breaking the law." Recently, we presented an award to a school in Atherton, California, and these 10-year-olds ask, "If we know these chemicals cause cancer, why do we use them?" When you answer, "Because it's cheap," you feel like a jerk. Why do we need a law to do the right thing?

Left: The Hawaii Preparatory Academy Energy Lab, a living building in Kamuela, HI.

FROM LEFT: MATTHEW MILLMAN, ADAM DRESSLER

2

THE BIG IDEA

Pay people to turn off the lights.

THE INNOVATORS: CURTIS TONGUE & MATT DUESTERBERG, OHMCONNECT

The truth is, it's hard to motivate people to save energy. Curtis Tongue and Matt Duesterberg have a solution—bribe people. Their San Francisco–based app, Ohmconnect, works like this: It sends its users notifications when they're pulling power from a dirty and expensive power plant (usually during peak hours). In response, users turn off a few lights to reduce the load on the plant—an action Ohmconnect is happy to pay for—and pocket the cash. "What it does, at a fundamental level, is turn homes into virtual power plants," says Tongue.

3

THE BIG IDEA

Minimalism is good for the soul.

THE INNOVATORS: JOSHUA FIELDS MILLBURN & RYAN NICODEMUS, THE MINIMALISTS

In the pursuit of paring down, it doesn't get more dramatic than Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus. The former telecom workers, friends since fifth grade, have purged their belongings and lifestyle to the bare minimum, and share their strategies with more than 4 million followers on their website *(theminimalists.com).* One of the more extreme activities they suggest? Pack everything you own into boxes as if you're moving, unpack only what you need over the next 21 days, then donate everything else. But for the duo, being minimalists isn't just about lightening your carbon footprint; it's also about personal well-being, says Millburn. "They go hand in hand," he says. "Life feels calmer with less stuff around you." And if visions of empty bookshelves, barren closets, and zero fun are dancing through your mind, let Millburn put them to rest: This is about making room for more, he says. More time, more hobbies, more experiences.

4

THE BIG IDEA

Roofs can solve our water problem.

THE INNOVATOR: NATE DOWNEY, PERMADESIGN

Santa Fe permaculture landscape designer Nate Downey knows the drill: Do a rain dance for weeks, then rejoice as it falls before cursing the flooding and erosion it causes. "My thought has always been, How can we turn that erosion problem into a rainwater-harvesting solution?" he says. He found the answer in an unlikely place: the roof. We asked him to tell us more.

Why should we pay attention to more than permeable paving in the landscape?

I'm all about the impermeable surfaces: roofs, patios, and driveways. But especially roofs—they're so clean! And rain comes off of them with such force. It's such a resource waiting to be captured. No matter where you live in the West, there's a rainy season. It might be winter in the dry-summer Mediterranean sections, or monsoons in the Southwest, but everyone's got a roof.

What are you doing to spread the roof gospel?

I have a Roofwater Calculator on my website *(permadesign.com)* that allows you to type in your address and see how much rain comes down from your roof in an average year. It's a way to make this resource real, and really wake people up.

How do people turn their roofs into water-harvesting machines?

There are different ways. It can be an active system with a cistern and pump. Or it can be a passive one—having a downspout that leads into a trench. I fill the trench with any type of porous rock, essentially creating an underground sponge that stores water. Traditionally, pumice is used. But I prefer a more sustainable material called Growstone *(growstone.com),* a product made from recycled glass, developed in Santa Fe and manufactured in Albuquerque.

Are all roofs created equal?

Pitched metal roofs are better than flat tar-and-gravel ones. But really, there are not a lot of bad roofs out there.

5

THE BIG IDEA

Developers will save us. Really.

Developers are rarely cast as the good guy. But these four people are shaping Western cities, proving that sustainable housing can be affordable, and dramatically remaking forgotten buildings. If this is what progress looks like, all we can say is: Yes, Please, In My Backyard.

Right: A solar-powered building by Meea Kang in downtown Sacramento.

6

THE BIG IDEA

It takes a (tiny) village.

THE INNOVATOR: JAY SHAFER, FOUR LIGHTS HOUSES

Residing in a tiny home has gone from fringe movement to reality-show phenomenon—and is poised to go mainstream. An early champion of extremely-small-space living, designer Jay Shafer will soon break ground on the first Tiny House Village *(fourlightshouses.com),* in Sebastopol, California, a cluster of 20 or so micro homes. The village will include lots of walkable and public areas to offer residents space beyond their home—and encourage community.

7

THE BIG IDEA

Give trash a future.

THE INNOVATORS: ERIC EDELSON & PAUL BURNS, FIRECLAY TILE

That glossy gray tile below? It's made out of a former computer screen. The ones next to it? Recycled toilets. San Francisco's Fireclay Tile *(fireclaytile.com)* makes the kind of ceramic and glass tile you'd find in a high-end showroom out of all kinds of upcycled materials—granite dust, solar panels, old Coke bottles. "We're proud to call ourselves scavengers," says CEO Eric Edelson. The company was founded in 1986 by Paul Burns, a second-generation tile maker and born experimenter, who has increased the amount of recycled content in his tiles in recent years, while maintaining a high level of craftsmanship. And that, as Edelson points out, has eco implications too: "Good design is the most sustainable thing you can do—because it has longevity."

LEFT: LINDA LAMB PETERS; ABOVE: BRUCE DAMONTE

MEEA KANG

If you want to find Meea Kang, follow the light-rail tracks into downtown Sacramento. There, on former industrial land next to the busy La Valentina station, her firm, Domus Development *(domusd.com),* built an 81-unit solar-powered building that caters to low-income residents. Kang tackles projects few others would touch: She's built worker housing in Tahoe (a project that earned LEED Silver status) and artist live/work studios in bankrupt Vallejo, California, where she convinced officials that a building near public transportation meant fewer parking spaces were needed. "I change the way the cities think on every project," she says. "I push them outside their comfort zone."

KEVIN CAVENAUGH

The name of Kevin Cavenaugh's Portland company, Guerrilla Development *(guerrilladev.co),* says it all. He buys overlooked buildings nobody knows what to do with in burgeoning neighborhoods and adapts them into homes or mixed-use spaces people beg to rent. Take an empty warehouse in the city's Sunnyside neighborhood. Until Cavenaugh bought it, it was just molting paint. He morphed it into four lofts with French doors opening onto a courtyard. It's his version of activism against what he calls "greedy buildings"—formulaic structures meant to make money but not to add to a city's fabric. In contrast, "adaptive reuse is the epitome of playing with what you've got," he says.

MIKE BROWN & CASEY LYNCH

Before urbanization was a buzzword, it was the market insight that launched Mike Brown and Casey Lynch's Los Angeles firm, LocalConstruct *(localconstruct.com).* Their calling card is high design in urban corridors—often in fast-growing Western cities like Boise. Last year, they finished a remodel of the historic Owyhee hotel there, turning it into an environmentally sensitive downtown hub that houses a tech firm and cocktail bar, plus 36 apartments. They're also developing in Colorado and Utah, hoping to prevent the sprawl, inefficiencies, and low housing stock that plague larger cities like L.A. and San Francisco. "We can write a new paradigm," Brown says.

8

THE BIG IDEA

Everyone deserves green housing.

THE INNOVATOR: NICOLÓ BINI, BINISHELLS

Building our coffee shops, sports arenas, and homes is the world's largest net source of pollution. The solution could come in *Jetsons*-like domed structures known as a Binishells. They were created in the 1960s by Dante Bini, who built hundreds of them without seeing the idea take off. For the last five years, however, a team led by his son, architect Nicoló Bini, has been updating the technology and pitching it across the globe as sustainable, affordable housing. The first modern-day Binishells project, a home in Malibu, goes public this year.

1. The domes are raised with what's essentially oversize balloons, rather than wood forms, so they go up within hours and there's less waste (the air forms can be reused more than 50 times).

2. Each dome is one solid piece of concrete, so it's hyper energy-efficient and strong enough to support a rooftop garden (or withstand natural disasters).

3. Binishells make use of local materials and labor, so they're less expensive to build, with the bonus of boosting the local economy.

CASE STUDY NO. 1

Boulder

Meet Sue, Janice, Rich, Bob & Dianne. They all live together, but not the way you think.

CITY LIVING… NEW & IMPROVED!

Communes, cohousing, just plain close quarters—*Chris Colin* has lived this urban trend and loves it.

How many times have hot pancakes materialized on your back porch? Never? Once? No more than twice, I'd wager. What a paltry number of pancake deliveries. Once, back-door pancakes were plentiful in my life, and at a certain level—a level some expert in Washington has surely calculated—things have gone downhill ever since.

When we were in our 20s, my wife and I moved into an old one-room Baptist church, one of three neighboring buildings that had been carved up and remade into an informal compound, on a dusty West Oakland street. Five couples shared a lush, buzzing backyard. All fences were pulled down. Laundry was done en masse; clothes were swapped freely before parties. We lived on top of one another in a way that made real estate agents blanch and our happiness needles redline. And when people made pancakes, they made a mile of them, and our early sharing economy stood unrivaled.

Life was cheaper; there was that. More residents meant manageable mortgages, plus we shared expenses when possible—laundry soap, pancake ingredients. But even more valuable was the

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY

FROM LEFT:
Boulder homeowners Sue Heilbronner, Bob and Dianne Bush, and Janice and Rich Sands.

psychic boon. That community and connectedness had withered in late-capitalist America was hardly news. What surprised us was the ease of the solution: Cram more people into one smallish space.

Of course, thriftiness has translated into tight quarters since forever. At the edge of our shared yard stood remnants of old shacks once shared by early-20th-century railroad workers; they'd sleep in shifts. I wish I knew how they felt about it. Today, though, more and more urban dwellers are discovering that cozy co-living arrangements needn't be a sacrifice at all.

In the pages that follow, we look in on two such types of communities. The first was designed in advance to suit the residents-to-be. Against the woodsy backdrop of Boulder, three households of diverse ages and backgrounds came together for a kind of conscious downsizing. The commission of the project represented an embrace of "new West" values—sustainability, walkability, sociability—and a rejection of what one resident called "the suburban model of having to get in your car and drive everywhere."

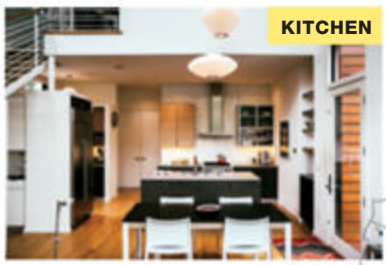
Life was cheaper. More residents meant manageable mortgages, plus we shared expenses when possible. But even more valuable was the psychic boon of connectedness.

The other community we highlight has an entirely different genesis. In the heart of not-at-all-woodsy Oakland, a developer bought a lot, took advantage of mellow zoning laws, and built a cluster of homes in a thoroughly mixed-use neighborhood. (Yes, that's a warehouse next door.) Built on spec, the units weren't tailored to a community; on the contrary, the developer had faith in a growing desire among Bay Area residents for a more intimate way of coexisting. It has worked out wonderfully for all involved.

Not that this should be news. A bunch of human beings living in close proximity is called a city. Okay, America may have forgotten the virtues of urban life and succumbed to the anesthetizing appeal of the suburbs and all that personal

Boulder

Take two parts "empty nesters downsizing," add one part "single entrepreneur," and what do you have? A trio of small interlocking houses—built specifically for their residents—sharing a lot close to downtown. The masterminds were contractor Rich Sands and his wife, Janice, who had no trouble recruiting as co-conspirators their friends Bob and Dianne Bush, a retired graphic designer and legal secretary, respectively; and D.C. transplant Sue Heilbronner, who'd seen at open houses what Rich and architecture firm Arch11 were capable of creating.



KITCHEN

"It's the first time since grad school that we've lived amongst neighbors so close. You have to pay attention a little. Still, most of our friends are envious. Two or three of them have said, 'If you ever do this again, we'd be interested.'" —RICH

LIVING ROOM

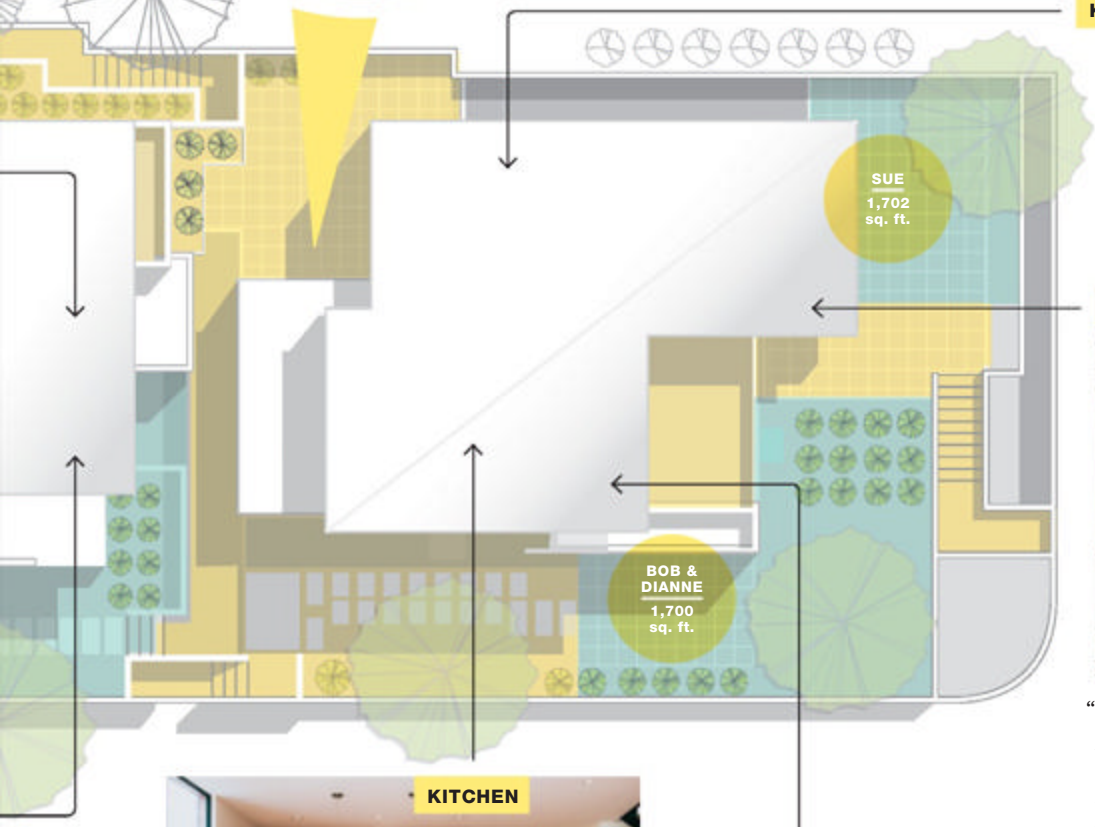
"Janice and I moved from a house on a sizable lot—there was all that landscaping and maintenance to deal with, not to mention snow removal. Here, we share the maintenance and don't have all those headaches." —RICH

THE "PIAZZA"

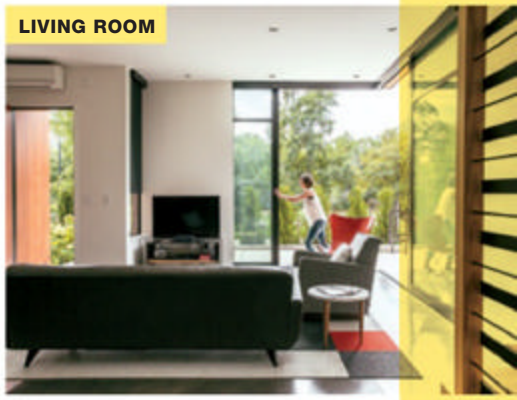
"I'm amazed we can live in such close proximity and not run into each other all the time, coming and going. In fact, it's almost a disappointment—we'd like to see even more of everyone." —DIANNE

KITCHEN

"My house's living area is larger than the others because I entertain a lot for work. Though I cook nowhere near as much as I should!" —SUE



LIVING ROOM



"We bought the land before we knew anything about what we'd be building. That's how much trust we all had in Rich. And we had the perfect guarantee—we'd be living next door to the builder." —SUE

KITCHEN

"Downsizing forced us to go through all that stuff you collect over the years. It was bittersweet, deciding what stays and what goes. But now, living here is like we're always on vacation." —DIANNE

LIVING ROOM

"We're right on Canyon Boulevard, and it's taken Dianne and me a little time to get used to the traffic. Though someone from New York probably wouldn't even notice it." —BOB

ILLUSTRATIONS: MARGARET SLOAN

Oakland

space. But we've swung back. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of Americans living in metro areas grew by 12.1 percent, while rural and suburban America *shed* numbers. Humans want proximity.

From this truth have cascaded concrete benefits. Having more bodies per city block brings more amenities, livelier streets, and better public-transit options. Environmental impact shrinks and so can the crime rate. Once considered a liability, density can, in fact, increase property values.

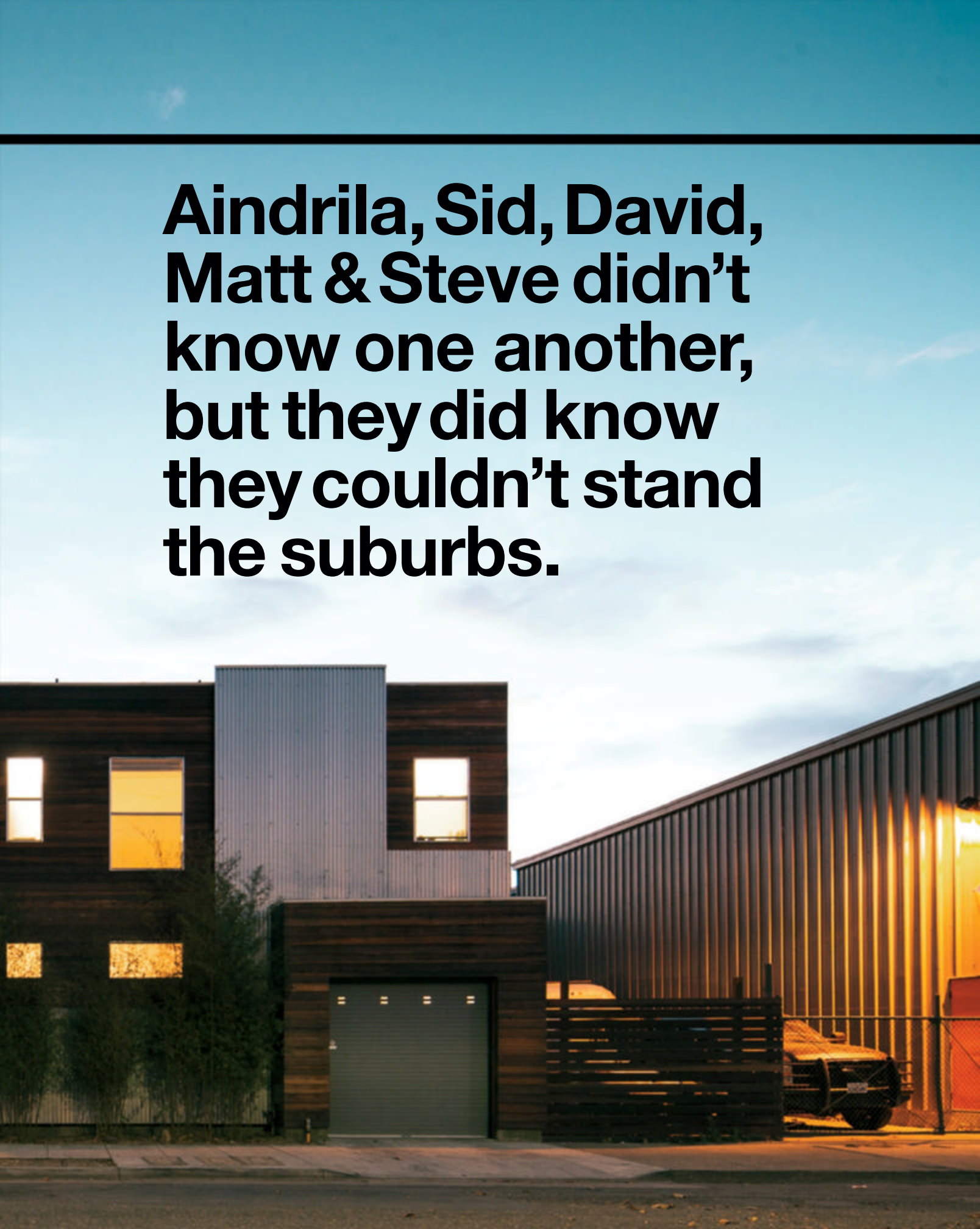
Metro areas have had to get smart about accommodating everyone. Vancouver, B.C., opted for tower-podium architecture, green space, and walkability and called it creative densification. "Vancouverism" became a guiding principle for other Western cities.

Cohousing and other forms of cohabitation rebind us. You look out for one another. You buy one rice cooker instead of three. One of your housemates has a cute brother you should meet. You know, society.

Policymakers throughout the West are now developing a slew of new tricks to cope with growing populations. Zoning reform, development of leftover lots, and improved public transportation have helped Washington, Oregon, and California convert massive urban influx into smart growth. Portland has combined light-rail projects, zoning codes, and high-density housing to shoo more residents into its historically sparsely populated downtown. Two recent ordinances in San Francisco loosened laws around the city's thousands of under-the-radar in-law units, acknowledging the necessity of a more flexible approach to urban planning.

A micro version of densification has taken hold as well, as individual city dwellers find ever-cleverer ways of Tetris-ing themselves into small spaces. Cohousing and other forms of cohabitation rebind us. You look out for one another. You buy one rice cooker instead of three. One of your housemates has a cute brother you should meet. You know, society.

Aindrila, Sid, David, Matt & Steve didn't know one another, but they did know they couldn't stand the suburbs.



CASE STUDY NO. 2

Oakland

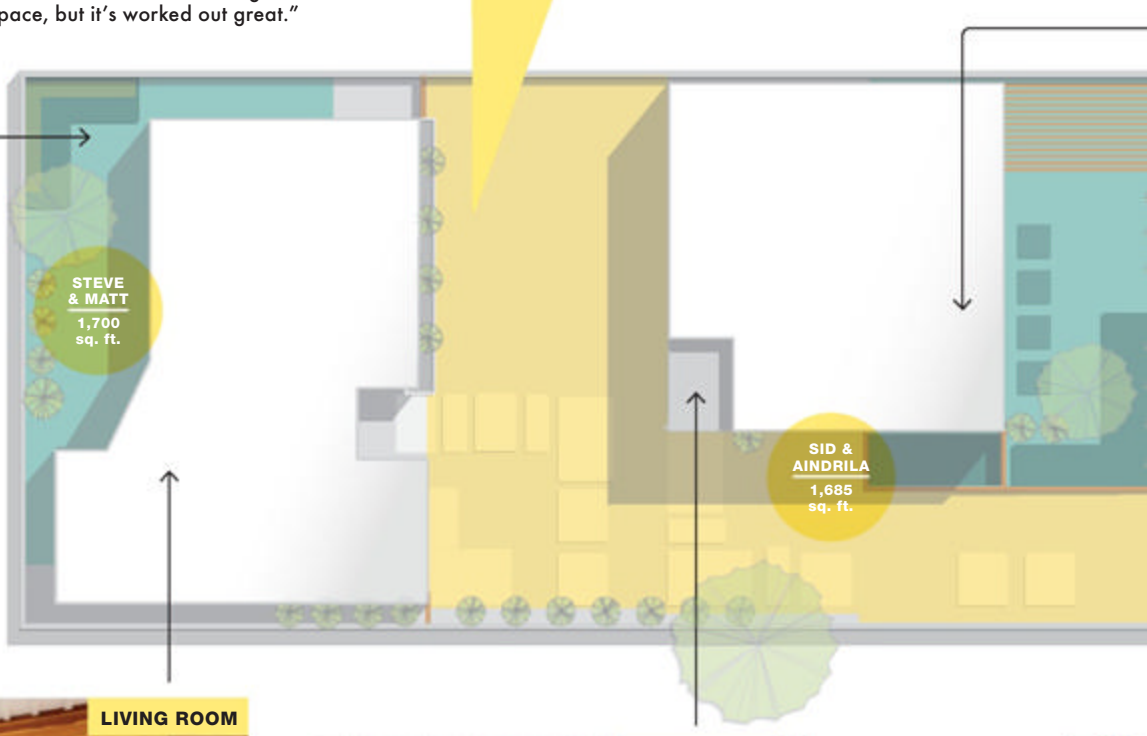
In this example, the developers took the lead. Dogtown Development Co. subdivided this West Oakland lot into a cluster of three houses (designed by architect Matthew Baran), and then looked for adventurous spirits to sign on. Meet Sid Patil and Aindrila Mukhopadhyay, a pair of scientists whose family had outgrown their beloved flat in San Francisco's Mission District; Matt Purner, who oversees clinical trials for a pharmaceutical company, and therapist intern Steve Salustri, who fell for the area's industrial feel; and photographer David Turek, whose life has taken him to New Jersey—he now rents out his unit—but who stops by whenever he's in town. As Matt says, "None of us went into this knowing each other or wanting to share space, but it's worked out great."

DRIVEWAY

"Our windows facing Sid and Aindrila's home were placed very high, strategically—the design works really well from a privacy point of view." —MATT

BACKYARD

"Our lawn's artificial turf, our plants are succulents, and the driveway is all grasses—everything's low-water and maintenance-free." —STEVE

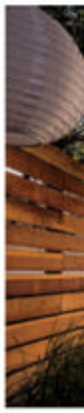


LIVING ROOM

"We have more space between our houses than in most cities. We don't see each other more than any other neighbors do." —MATT

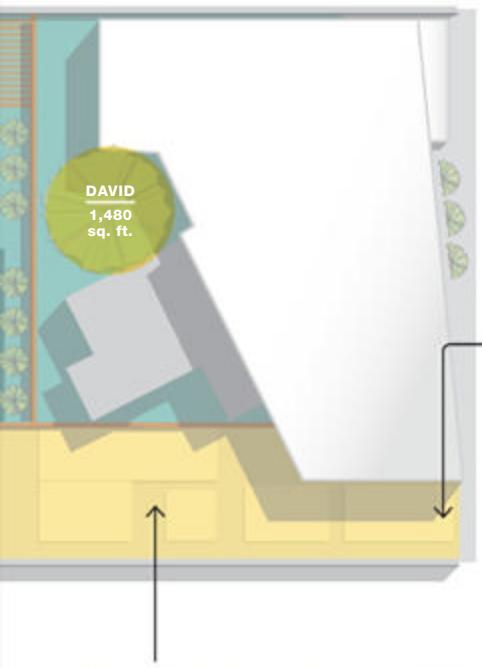
FRONT DOOR

"We were blown away by the house when we first saw it. The location—it took us some time to be convinced. But West Oakland is what the Mission was 12 years ago." —SID



KITCHEN

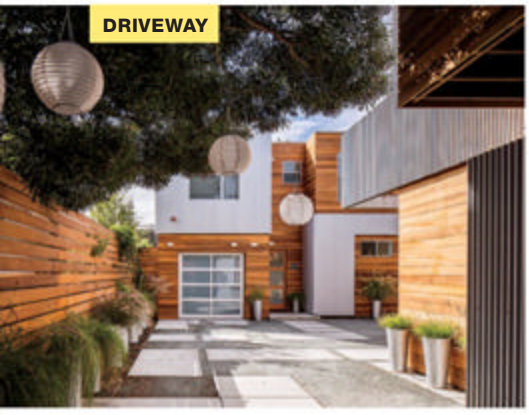
"We're very urban people. Our fear was that if we moved to the suburbs for more space, we'd lose that social environment. This is a good mix of both."—**SID**



GATE TO DRIVEWAY

"I call this place The Enclave—it's unlike any other place in West Oakland."—**DAVID**

DRIVEWAY



"Matt put the lanterns up for Steve's graduation party. He was going to take them down after, but we said, 'No—leave them!'"—**AINDRILA**

Eventually, my wife and I left the compound. I don't know why—some vague impression this is what 30-somethings do. We found our way to a normal house in San Francisco, its yard enclosed by normal fencing. It was a traditional, minimal-free-pancakes place. I detected a sense, on the part of the parents and other folk, that we'd made it somehow—into a grown-up home, out of youthful funkiness.

I love our house but missed the daily improvisation of sharing physical space. I missed knowing that someone would notice if you choked on a chicken bone. I missed the pancakes. It's not the same when you cook them yourself.

A couple of years after we bought our house, an old friend who'd been living in Uganda moved to town. He'd lived here before for decades, but the city had closed up in his absence. Rents were astronomical, and foolishly he'd failed to invent a Facebook or a Twitter. He did, however, possess a sense of adventure, so on a bright Monday morning, a decade or two past the standard age for housemate-ization, Amy and I welcomed him into the bedroom downstairs.

It's been awesome. Both parties get to live in an exorbitant city without quite losing our shirts, and in a small way, a dollop of Mayberry has returned to our lives. We give one another space but also have spaghetti together sometimes. Doug has his own entrance, but also a standing invitation to come knock back a bottle of wine.

I missed the improvisation of sharing physical space. I missed the pancakes. It's not the same when you cook them yourself.

Does our kids' howling sometimes wake him up? Totally. Do we walk around naked 60 percent less of the time? Try to! But it turns out minor inconveniences have the odd effect of improving, not diminishing, one's quality of life. We're a social organism. Evolutionarily, the species benefited immensely from bigger and more interconnected populations—think genetic diversity and hardier immune systems. Making extra pasta is part of the program.

The coauthor of What to Talk About, Chris Colin wrote about his one-night pop-up restaurant for our February 2015 issue.

Small wonder

Architect Isabelle Duvivier turned her little Venice bungalow into a water-saving power-house.

BY
CHRISTINE LENNON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
THOMAS J. STORY

PROP STYLING BY
ROBIN TURK

PREVIOUS PAGE, LEFT
Before the renovation, the bungalow had an aging stucco finish and an unfriendly chain-link fence. Duvivier maintained the modest exterior but made it more welcoming with a front-yard vegetable garden and a low fence.

PREVIOUS PAGE, RIGHT
With help from a pump during the dry season, a custom wheel circulates water from a pond stocked with fish to remove mosquitoes. When it rains, it's powered by runoff from the roof funneled through a downspout.

ABOVE
Duvivier built the kitchen island and cabinet doors (affixed to Ikea cabinet boxes) from repurposed Douglas fir, installed so the grain runs horizontally. The counters are made from recycled concrete, typically made from the rubble of demolished concrete structures.

In a town

where multimillion-dollar homes are popping up where tiny cottages once stood, architect Isabelle Duvivier didn't take the bait to build big. Instead, as she remodeled the 1912 bungalow where she lives with her husband, cinematographer John Tipton, and their 11-year-old son, Finn, her priority was to make the home both eco-friendly and in sync with the 100-year-old Venice, California, neighborhood. So as she drew up plans to renovate the 1,000-square-foot bungalow—adding a master suite, a bathroom and closet, and an open loft upstairs—she capped the new size at just under 1,700 square feet. "For three people, we didn't need a gigantic house," she says. "And if it were bigger, it really would have eliminated our garden space."

Duvivier has been building environmentally conscious homes for others for years, and hers was no different. "It doesn't have to be more expensive than building another way: It's just about making certain decisions early on," she says. The house is powered by solar panels—even after Duvivier charges her electric car, the family has surplus energy to give back to the city. Almost every surface contains recycled materials, from the concrete kitchen countertops to the insulation. Duvivier also repurposed the original Douglas fir wood from areas they demolished to build stair treads and a bookcase. Her plan almost went bust as she ran out of wood, until she struck up a

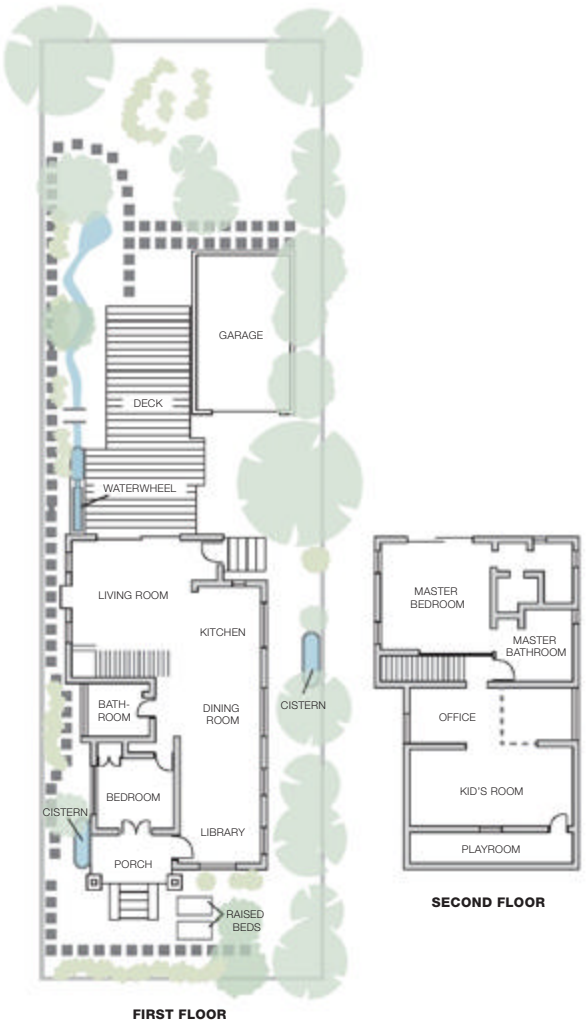
RIGHT
The family uses this entrance on the side of the house as the front door. Outdoor shoe storage takes advantage of the mild climate.

ABOVE AND LEFT
Duvivier transformed a neglected attic space into a second-floor room for her son. Two trundle beds built into drawers in the walls on either side of the bed accommodate guests.

RIGHT
The open stairwell design lets light travel through the house. "In a compact space, you can have light everywhere at the center of the house," Duvivier says.

RIGHT AND NEXT PAGE, TOP
The living room opens completely to the back garden, and doubles the living space most of the year. The wooden floors are a combination of the home's original wood and wood purchased from a neighbor.

ILLUSTRATIONS: MARGARET SLOAN



FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR

conversation with a neighbor. "He was storing some wood under his house after he remodeled," Duvivier says. "Our houses were built at the same time, so it might even be from the same forest."

Against the striking organic materials, Duvivier kept the furnishings simple, mostly classic midcentury shapes in black and white. The color comes from the rugs, the family's books, and the plants growing outside every door and window, which draw attention to the real highlight of the property: the garden.

The entire yard is watered exclusively by gray water and rainwater that's diverted as it runs off the roof, landing in two cisterns and flowing over a waterwheel. One of the cisterns is open, like a trough, and circulates water in a fish pond. It's so appealing that a white egret is a regular visitor. Gorgeous birds aside, the wheel is in many ways the centerpiece of the yard, spinning slowly

when the marine fog condenses and drips down, and turning much more quickly when it rains. "When it does rain here," Duvivier says, "our house is a very exciting place." The architect moved the front door to the side of the house so people would walk by the water features as they entered the home. "I wanted to make the water super visible as a reminder of how precious it is in the region," she says.

Inside, the water from showers, sinks, and the washing machine flows into a gray-water system that pumps it into the soil beneath some strategically positioned trees—a couple of cottonwoods, a sycamore, and a willow—and finishing in a banana bed and passion fruit vines. "Those native riparian trees, they're used to having their feet wet," Duvivier says. "They like it."

The backyard is the family's haven too, bringing with it a strong dose of neighborhood spirit. On weekends, they regularly move their big dining table outside and host parties, including an outdoor movie night for Finn's birthday. "The kids are always playing tetherball, jumping on the trampoline, or climbing in the treehouse," Duvivier says. Meanwhile, she's swapping honey from her rooftop beehive for the plums, lemons, and oranges from her neighbors' mature fruit trees. (Her own orchard is still young.)

The front yard is just as friendly. There, Duvivier installed a low fence and planted a vegetable garden that beckons the community—passersby can see the tomatoes, lettuces, and peas growing in the raised beds. It's a far cry from some of the high-walled yards in other parts of town, but it's another example of how the house is at one with its environment—and beautifully at that.

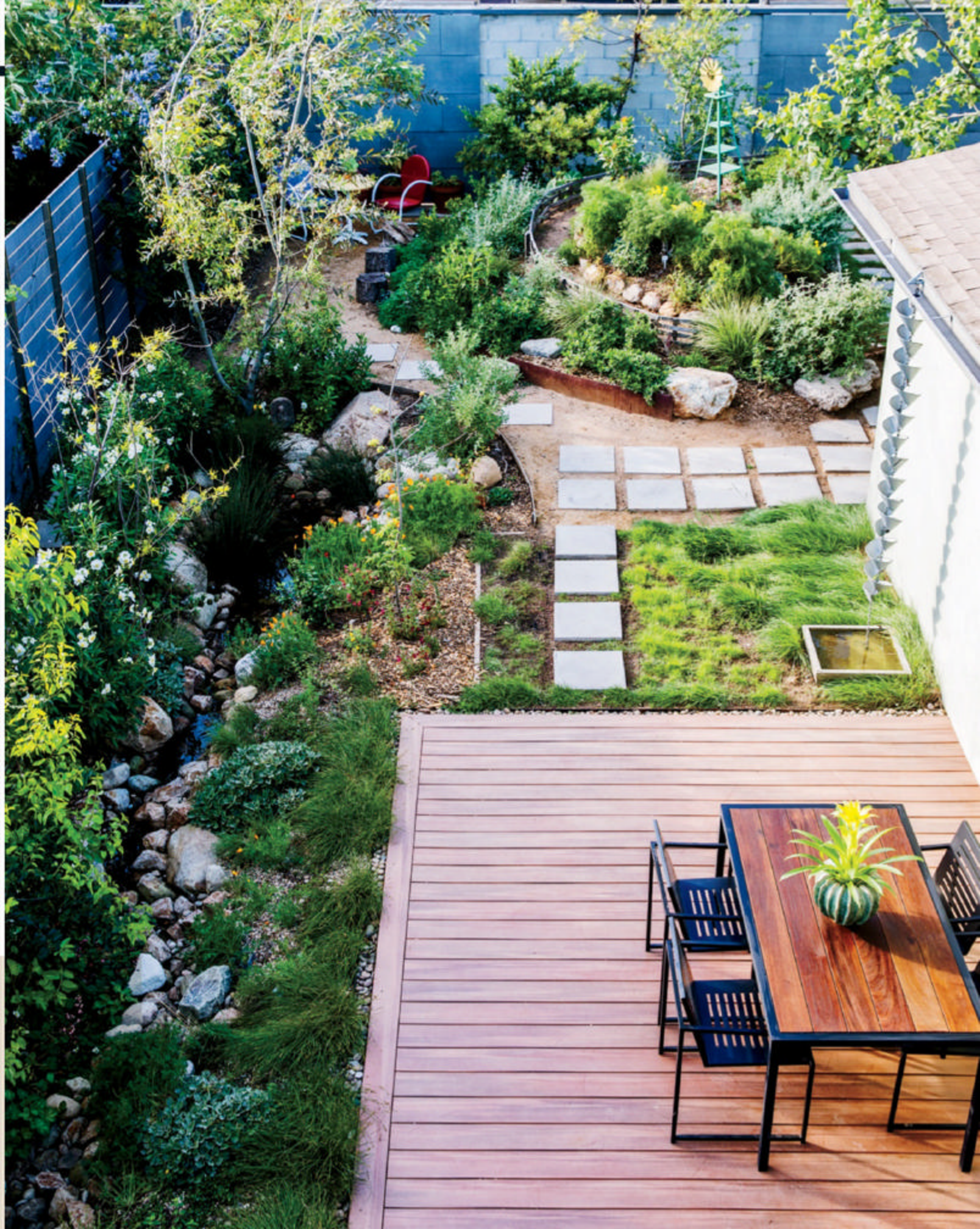
DESIGN Isabelle Duvivier, Venice, CA; *idarchitect.com.*

DIGITAL BONUS Learn how to lighten your footprint, from easy DIY tips to sustainable renovation ideas: *sunset.com/lowimpact.*

TOP
The roofline is divided into three parts. One drains over the waterwheel into a rain garden, another drains into a cistern for storage and irrigation, and the last drains into an open cistern. These features helped the home earn LEED Platinum status.

ABOVE
Duvivier flipped the orientation of the lot, placing the entrance at the side of the house and the raised vegetable beds in the front. A beehive, located on top of the garage, helps to pollinate the garden and the neighbors' citrus trees.

RIGHT
To address a drainage issue, Duvivier regraded the lot, creating slopes that lead to a dry creekbed that runs the length of the garden. The elevated planting area she calls "Sage Hill," accented by a colorful windmill and California brittlebush, requires little water.



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PEAK SEASON

AAH, STRAWBERRIES!

Eat them fresh by the handful, but save some to try in these inventive new ways.

FOOD STYLING: ROBYN VALARIK

Photographs by IAIN BAGWELL

STRAWBERRY SEMIFREDDO

SERVES 8 TO 16 / 1 HOUR, PLUS 6 HOURS TO FREEZE

Streaks of berries throughout and more spooned on top make this classic Italian ice cream dessert a great finish to a spring dinner. For the most velvety texture, serve it half-frozen, just as the name suggests (*semifreddo* means half-cold).

3 cups sliced strawberries plus 3 cups halved berries (2¼ lbs. total)
¾ cup sugar, divided
1¼ cups heavy whipping cream
5 large egg yolks* plus 4 large egg whites
1 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. orange flower water*, or 2½ tsp. orange zest, divided
Pinch of kosher salt

1. Line an 8-in. square pan with plastic wrap, letting it overhang on 2 sides. Freeze.
2. Coarsely mash sliced berries with 2 tbsp. sugar in a medium saucepan, using a potato masher. Bring to a simmer over high heat; then reduce heat and simmer, stirring often, until slightly jamlike, 5 to 6 minutes. Set pan in a bowl of ice and water.
3. Beat cream in a medium bowl with a mixer until soft peaks form. Chill.
4. Set out a medium saucepan and 2 medium heatproof bowls (each should fit snugly in pan without touching bottom). In first bowl, whisk egg yolks with 2 tbsp. sugar and 1 tbsp. orange flower water or 2 tsp. orange zest. Put egg whites, 6 tbsp. sugar, and the salt in second bowl.
5. Fill saucepan with 1 in. water and bring to a bare simmer over medium heat. Set bowl with yolks in pan and whisk until thick and ribbons form at bottom of bowl, 3½ to 5 minutes; don't overcook. Set aside.
6. Set bowl with whites in pan. Using a clean whisk, whisk until frothy and warmed through (105° on an instant-read thermometer), 1½ minutes. Remove from heat and beat with a mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form.
7. Stir half of strawberry mixture into yolk mixture. Fold this into whites, then fold in whipped cream. Gently fold in remaining strawberry mixture, leaving some streaks. Pour into prepared pan. Wrap airtight and freeze until firm, at least 6 hours.
8. Combine halved berries, remaining 2 tbsp. sugar, and 1 tsp. orange flower water or ½ tsp. orange zest in a bowl. Unwrap semifreddo, turning onto a cutting board, and cut into 16 squares. Set 1 or 2 in each bowl. Let stand until edges soften, 10 to 15 minutes. Spoon berries around semifreddo.

**If you're concerned about eating undercooked eggs, use pasteurized eggs in the shell, such as Safest Choice (safeeggs.com); in step 6, whites will reach only soft peaks and take 10 minutes to beat. Find orange flower water with cocktail and baking supplies.*

MAKE AHEAD *Through step 7, up to 2 weeks.*

PER SQUARE 142 Cal., 54% (77 Cal.) from fat; 2.5 g protein; 8.5 g fat (4.8 g sat.); 15 g carbo (1.2 g fiber); 30 mg sodium; 91 mg chol. GF/LC/LS/V

Tips for cooks

When you're shopping, look for strawberries with bright red color, fresh green caps, and a sweet fragrance. Some farmers' markets are starting to label varieties; 'Chandler', first bred in California and now grown around the West, is sweet and tender. Chill berries unwashed and rinse just before using so they don't get soggy.

PEAK SEASON

STRAWBERRY HIBISCUS COOLER

SERVES 6 (MAKES 4½ CUPS) / 40 MINUTES

With or without the vodka, this sweet-tart drink deserves a spot at brunch.

1 cup dried hibiscus flowers*
⅔ cup sugar, divided
1½ cinnamon sticks
2 cups halved strawberries plus a few quartered or halved berries
¼ cup lemon juice
9 oz. citron vodka or regular vodka (optional)
Sparkling water
Small mint sprigs or leaves

1. Combine hibiscus, ⅓ cup sugar, the cinnamon sticks, and 2 cups water in a medium saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let infusion sit, covered, 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in a blender, purée halved berries with remaining ⅓ cup sugar and 2 cups cold water. Strain into a metal bowl and stir in lemon juice. Set in a bowl of ice and water until cold.
3. Strain hibiscus infusion into another metal bowl and set in a bowl of ice and water until cold. (Discard soaked hibiscus, or see page 100.) Combine hibiscus infusion and berry purée in a pitcher.
4. Fill glasses with ice. Add 1½ oz. vodka to each if you like, followed by about ¾ cup berry cooler. Stir in a splash of sparkling water. Top with quartered berries and mint.

**Find dried hibiscus, called jamaica in Spanish, at well-stocked grocery stores with Latino foods, at Latino markets, and at worldspice.com.*

MAKE AHEAD *Through step 3, chilled, up to 1 week; stir before using.*

PER SERVING WITHOUT VODKA 106 Cal., 1.3% (1.4 Cal.) from fat; 0.4 g protein; 0.2 g fat (0 g sat.); 27 g carbo (1.2 g fiber); 0.9 mg sodium; 0 mg chol.

DIGITAL BONUS Get our no-fail guide to growing your own strawberries, plus the best varieties for your yard: *sunset.com/growstrawberries.*

By ROMNEY STEELE

STRAWBERRY, QUINOA, and RICOTTA SALATA SALAD

SERVES 4 / 55 MINUTES

We could make a meal of this deliciously unexpected combination, but it's excellent alongside a grilled steak too. Sautéing the quinoa in oil before simmering helps it come out fluffy every time.

SALAD

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- ½ small dried red chile, broken in half
- ⅛ tsp. kosher salt
- ⅓ cup quinoa, rinsed well and drained
- 1 qt. loosely packed watercress (about 1½ bunches, trimmed to about 5 in. long)
- 1½ cups quartered or halved strawberries
- 1 large Persian cucumber or ¼ English cucumber, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced into half-moons
- 1 small spring onion bulb or 2 green onions, cut into 2-in. slivers
- ¼ lb. ricotta salata or feta cheese, thinly sliced

DRESSING

- 3 tbsp. finely chopped strawberries
- 1½ tsp. finely chopped shallot
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh basil leaves
- 2 tbsp. white balsamic vinegar
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- About ¼ tsp. pepper
- 2 tbsp. *each* extra-virgin olive oil and canola oil

1. Make salad: Heat oil with chile and salt in a small saucepan over medium heat until fragrant, 2 minutes. Add quinoa and toast, stirring often, until it starts to turn golden in spots, 4 to 6 minutes. Stir in ⅔ cup water, cover, and simmer 15 minutes. Turn off heat and let sit 5 minutes, then pour quinoa onto a plate and let cool. Discard chile.
2. Meanwhile, put remaining salad ingredients except for cheese in a wide bowl and set aside.
3. Make dressing: In a small bowl, combine 2 tsp. water with all dressing ingredients except oils. Set aside 10 minutes; whisk in oils.
4. Gently toss quinoa with 2 tbsp. dressing. Spoon onto 4 dinner plates. Mound salad mixture on top and tuck in cheese. Season generously with more pepper and serve with remaining dressing to add to salads.

PER SERVING 328 Cal., 62% (204 Cal.) from fat; 8.9 g protein; 23 g fat (7.7 g sat.); 18 g carbo (3 g fiber); 307 mg sodium; 7 mg chol. LS/V

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GATHER

FROM TOP Tanya Holland (in orange) with husband Phil Surkis (center) and friends; main course of spiced veal shanks, mustard greens, and smoked sweet potatoes.

THE WELCOME TABLE

Chef Tanya Holland hosts a soulful seder. *By Margo True*

TANYA HOLLAND is known for her fresh, California-style soul food at Oakland's Brown Sugar Kitchen, but for years, she's wanted to host a seder. Her husband, Phil Surkis, is Jewish, and she's been fascinated by the Passover dinner as a guest at other people's houses. "It's the celebration where everyone's welcome," she says.

At Brown Sugar, customers of all races and classes commune over her chicken and waffles. For her seder, Holland wanted that same harmony of people and flavors. So last year, she and Surkis invited friends—African American, Jewish, or both—to their house in Oakland. The menu reflected the heritages around the table: It was based on seder classics like matzo-ball soup, but infused with the flavors of the African American South and North Africa.

In a dining room fragrant with cumin and cloves, Surkis, with help from everyone, led the ceremony. Not all the guests knew one another, but by the time they'd finished the flourless chocolate-pecan cake, they had traded advice, jokes, and tales about their lives. Two of them discovered that they lived a block apart. "I loved the stories and memories that came up, and the sharing," says Holland. As for the recipes themselves, they're wonderful at any time of the year, for anyone.

FOOD STYLING: KAREN SHINTO; PROP STYLING: KELLY ALLEN

Photographs by THOMAS J. STORY

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Photo: Doug Mangum

FRESH ASPARAGUS with PARSLEY AIOLI

SERVES 8 (MAKES ¾ CUP AIOLI) / 40 MINUTES

Holland began her seder menu with this bright green celebration of spring. If you have leftover aioli (garlic mayonnaise), use it with any cooked or raw vegetable, sautéed fish, or sandwiches.

2 large egg yolks*
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tsp. lemon zest
2 to 3 tbsp. lemon juice
½ cup grapeseed oil
3 tbsp. mild, fruity extra-virgin olive oil
½ tsp. sea salt
¼ tsp. pepper
½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
2½ lbs. green or white asparagus, preferably thick spears

1. In a blender or food processor, combine egg yolks, garlic, lemon zest, and lemon juice; pulse until smooth. Combine grapeseed and olive oils in a liquid measuring cup. With blender running, slowly drizzle in oils in a thin stream until mixture is thick, 2 minutes. Add salt, pepper, and parsley; pulse to blend.
2. Snap tough ends from asparagus. Lay each stalk flat on a cutting board and, using a vegetable peeler, peel to about 1 inch below the tip.
3. Bring at least 1 in. water to a simmer in a large frying pan or wide pot. Lay asparagus in pan and simmer, covered, until tender, 3 to 5 minutes (white asparagus may take longer). Cool in a bowl of ice and water; drain.
4. Serve asparagus on a large platter with aioli spooned across, or on the side.

**If you're concerned about eating raw egg yolks, use pasteurized egg yolks, available at well-stocked grocery stores.*

MAKE AHEAD *Aioli, up to 4 days, chilled; cooked asparagus, up to 1 day, chilled.*

PER SERVING 197 Cal., 90% (177 Cal.) from fat; 2.5 g protein; 20 g fat (2.5 g sat.); 3.9 g carbo (1.7 g fiber); 101 mg sodium; 52 mg chol. GF/LC/LS/V

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Holland preps the first course; her table before the feast; Creole matzo-ball soup; haroseth; guest Diane Johnson (in blue) talking with Tannis Reinhertz and Darwin Farrar before dinner.

CREOLE MATZO-BALL SOUP

SERVES 8 (MAKES 4 QTS.) / 2 HOURS

Spicy matzo balls and a chile-infused chicken stock shake up this classic.

MATZO BALLS

4 large eggs, lightly beaten
2 tbsp. chicken fat (skim from Roasted Chicken Stock, if you like; recipe on *sunset.com*) or vegetable oil
1 cup matzo meal
½ cup club soda
1¼ tsp. kosher salt
¼ tsp. pepper
1 tsp. Creole Spice (recipe at right) or Creole seasoning, such as Tony Chachere's
2 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves

SOUP

1 head garlic
About ½ tsp. kosher salt
Pepper
About 1 tbsp. olive oil
2 green bell peppers, cut into ½-in. dice
1 large onion, cut into ½-in. dice
3 celery stalks, cut into ½-in. dice
4 or 5 red Fresno or large red jalapeño chiles, stemmed, seeded, and minced
3 qts. Roasted Chicken Stock *(sunset.com)* or store-bought reduced-sodium chicken stock
½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves

1. Mix matzo-ball ingredients and chill, covered, 30 minutes to 2 hours.
2. Preheat oven to 400°. Cut top off garlic, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and drizzle with some oil. Wrap in foil; roast 1 hour.
3. In a large pot, heat 1 tbsp. oil over medium heat. Add vegetables and ½ tsp. salt, cover, and cook until starting to soften, 10 minutes. Squeeze garlic from cloves into a bowl, whisk in ½ cup stock, and pour into vegetables with remaining stock.
4. About 30 minutes before serving, bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer. Using wet hands, loosely form matzo mixture into scant 1-in. balls; add to stock as you go. Simmer until cooked through, 30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Serve hot, sprinkled with parsley.

MAKE AHEAD *Garlic, up to 1 week, chilled. Soup through step 3, up to 2 days, chilled.*

PER 2-CUP SERVING 228 Cal., 41% (94 Cal.) from fat; 14 g protein; 10 g fat (2.8 g sat.); 21 g carbo (2.3 g fiber); 740 mg sodium; 146 mg chol. LC

CREOLE SPICE

MAKES ABOUT ⅓ CUP / 15 MINUTES

Although you'll have spice left over, you'll be glad—it's delicious on eggs, poultry, and seafood. • Mix 3 tbsp. *each* **kosher salt**, **dried herbes de Provence***, and **ground cumin** with 5 tsp. **cayenne** and 4 tsp. *each* freshly ground **pepper** and **paprika**. Store airtight at room temperature up to 3 months.

**Find herbes de Provence in the spice section.*

HAROSETH

SERVES 8 (MAKES 4 CUPS) / 25 MINUTES

Haroseth is a traditional side dish at the seder table. This version, with dates and warm spices, leans toward North Africa.

4 firm, tart-sweet apples, such as Fuji or Gala, unpeeled
½ cup roasted unsalted almonds, roughly chopped
6 pitted Medjool dates, halved lengthwise and chopped (to yield about ½ cup)
¼ tsp. *each* ground ginger and cinnamon
¾ tsp. orange zest (from 1 large orange)
Pinch of ground cloves
2 tbsp. tawny port
¼ cup lightly toasted sliced almonds

1. Chop 1½ apples into ½-in. dice. Coarsely chop remaining 2½ apples, put in a food processor with all remaining ingredients except sliced almonds, and pulse until blended but still quite coarse.
2. Turn mixture into a bowl and stir in diced apples. Sprinkle with sliced almonds just before serving.

MAKE AHEAD *Up to 1 day (except toasted almonds), chilled.*

PER ½-CUP SERVING 164 Cal., 33% (55 Cal.) from fat; 3.1 g protein; 6.1 g fat (0.5 g sat.); 27 g carbo (3.7 g fiber); 0.7 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. GF/LC/LS

BRAISED MUSTARD GREENS with SPRING ONIONS

SERVES 8 (MAKES 8 CUPS) / 1¼ HOURS

These mustard greens get a little snap from a drizzle of cider vinegar and lots of spring onions. The onions resemble green onions (scallions), but the tops are thicker and the bulbs much larger; they have a sharp, bracing flavor that mellows when cooked. If you can't find them, use a triple amount of green onions instead—it's equally good.

4 lbs. mustard greens (about 5 large bunches), large stems removed, greens coarsely chopped
4 to 5 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
4 garlic cloves, minced
8 spring onions or 24 green onions, chopped
½ to 1 tsp. red chile flakes
1 tsp. kosher salt
2 tsp. cider vinegar

1. Rinse greens and drain. Set aside with water still clinging to leaves.
2. Heat 1½ tbsp. oil over medium heat in a large stockpot. Add garlic, onions, and chile flakes and cook, stirring often, until softened but not browned, about 5 minutes. Scoop half into a bowl and set aside.
3. Add half of greens to pot and cook, covered, until wilted, then add second half. When greens are thoroughly wilted, sprinkle with salt and toss with tongs.
4. Reduce heat and simmer greens, covered, until very tender, about 45 minutes, adding water occasionally if necessary to keep about ¼ in. water in bottom of pot.
5. Add vinegar, remaining oil, and reserved garlic-onion mixture and toss to mix (it will be quite liquidy).

MAKE AHEAD *Chopped greens, 1 day, covered and chilled; braised greens, 1 day, covered and chilled.*

PER SERVING 140 Cal., 52% (72 Cal.) from fat; 6.6 g protein; 8.4 g fat (1.2 g sat.); 14 g carbo (8.2 g fiber); 250 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. GF/LC/LS/VG

SMOKED SWEET POTATOES

SERVES 8 / 1¼ HOURS

To make these kosher, Holland uses coconut butter instead of cow's-milk butter or cream.

4 lbs. orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (often labeled "yams")
3 cups mesquite chips, soaked in water at least 30 minutes
¼ cup virgin coconut butter*
3 to 4 tbsp. maple syrup
¼ to ½ tsp. cayenne
About ¾ tsp. kosher salt

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Peel yams, then slice crosswise 1 in. thick. Sprinkle wood chips in a large roasting pan. Set a baking rack over chips. Pour in ¼ in. water. Put yams on rack, cover with foil, and roast until a knife slides in easily, 1 hour.
2. Mash yams. Stir in remaining ingredients and a little hot water if they seem stiff.

**Find at well-stocked markets and online.*

PER SERVING 219 Cal., 21% (46 Cal.) from fat; 3.1 g protein; 5.1 g fat (4.8 g sat.); 41 g carbo (5.9 g fiber); 236 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. GF/LC/LS/VG

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Camille Mason explains the seder guidebook, the Haggadah, to daughter Adele; seder plate of symbolic foods, including a roasted lamb bone; veal shanks; matzo; smoked sweet potatoes; mustard greens.

NORTH AFRICAN VEAL SHANKS

SERVES 8 / 3 HOURS, PLUS 6 HOURS TO MARINATE

Buy smaller shanks if you can find them (3 lbs. or so each); when cross-cut, they make ideal single servings. This recipe works well with beef short ribs too. For another seder-worthy main course from Holland (one that would go well with the rest of this menu), see her B-Side Brown Sugar Smoked Brisket recipe on *sunset.com*.

MARINADE

- 2 tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 tbsp. minced fresh ginger
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 3 whole veal shanks (about 8 lbs. total), preferably free-raised*, cross-cut by your butcher into 2-in.-thick slices; or 7 lbs. short ribs, cut crosswise into 4-in. pieces
- 2 jalapeño chiles, cut lengthwise into quarters and seeded if very hot

BRAISE

- 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tbsp. *ras el hanout* (from recipe at right or store-bought)
- ¼ cup grapeseed oil
- 1 cup dry red wine
- ¼ cup dry sherry
- 1½ qts. reduced-sodium beef broth
- 1 tbsp. *harissa**
- 5 garlic cloves
- 1 large onion, cut into 1-in. dice
- 3 or 4 celery ribs, cut into 1-in. pieces
- 1½ red bell peppers, cut into 1-in. dice
- 3 large carrots, cut into ½-in.-thick batons (about 3 in. long)
- ½ cup dried apricot halves

1. Marinate shanks: Mix garlic, ginger, oil, and soy sauce. Trim membrane from shanks (it shrinks during cooking and buckles the meat). Tie shanks around their girth with twine, then arrange in a large roasting pan in a single layer. Add chiles; pour in marinade. Chill at least 6 hours and up to overnight, turning once.
2. Braise shanks: Two hours before cooking, take shanks out of refrigerator. Put on a baking sheet (discard marinade) and dry with paper towels. Sprinkle with salt, then ras el hanout. Rinse and dry roasting pan.
3. Preheat oven to 325°. Heat roasting pan or 2 large dutch ovens over medium-high heat on stovetop and pour in oil. Add shanks and brown on both sides. Pour in wine and sherry, scraping up brown bits.
4. Add remaining ingredients to roasting pan (if using short ribs, add vegetables after 1 hour). Bring to a simmer, then cover tightly with foil. Put in oven and braise until a knife tip slides in easily, 2 to 2½ hours (about 3 hours for short ribs).
5. Lift shanks and about half of vegetables to a platter; keep warm, covered with foil. Set pan with remaining vegetables on stovetop and boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until juices reduce by about half and thickly coat the back of a spoon, 20 minutes. Strain (spoon off fat if using short ribs) and serve with shanks.

**Free-raised refers to calves raised on open pasture; it's available at some butcher shops and at Whole Foods Market, often labeled "Humanely Raised" or "Certified Humane." Find harissa, a North African chile paste, at well-stocked grocery stores. Its heat level varies by brand, so taste a little before using.*

PER SERVING WITH 2 TBSP. SAUCE 666 Cal., 32% (211 Cal.) from fat; 92 g protein; 24 g fat (4.5 g sat.); 16 g carbo (2.8 g fiber); 1,351 mg sodium; 340 mg chol.

RAS EL HANOUT

MAKES 6 TBSP. / 10 MINUTES

Loosely translated as "top of the shop," *ras el hanout* is a blend of 12 or more North African spices. • Heat 1 tsp. *each* **cumin seeds** and **coriander seeds** in a dry frying pan just until fragrant and a shade darker. Let cool. Grind 2 tsp. **peppercorns** to a powder in a clean coffee or spice grinder and turn into a bowl. Grind cumin and coriander and add to pepper. Blend in 2 tsp. **cinnamon**; 1 tsp. *each* **ground allspice**, **cardamom**, **cloves**, **ginger**, **nutmeg**, **turmeric**, and **dried thyme**; and ½ tsp. **cayenne**. **MAKE AHEAD** *Up to 2 months, covered airtight at room temperature.*

FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE-PECAN CAKE

SERVES 8 TO 12 / 2 HOURS

This cake will rise as it bakes, then sink dramatically in the center. Don't worry—just trim the top and save the pieces for snacks.

- 12 oz. bittersweet chocolate (63% or 64% cacao), chopped
- ½ cup plus 1½ tbsp. roasted pecan, almond, or walnut oil
- 3 tsp. vanilla extract, divided
- 1 cup lightly toasted pecans or almonds or ⅔ cup purchased nut flour*
- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp. granulated sugar, divided
- 3 to 4 large, firm oranges
- 7 large eggs, separated
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 cup powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven to 325° with a rack in the middle. Grease a 9-in. springform pan and line with parchment paper, cut to fit.
2. Heat chocolate in a double boiler or metal bowl set over (not in) a pot of simmering water until about half-melted. Remove pan from heat and stir until smooth. Stir in oil. Cool slightly; stir in 2 tsp. vanilla.
3. Grind pecans and 1 tbsp. granulated sugar in a food processor in 2 batches, pulsing so you don't end up with pecan butter (you'll have some larger pieces). With a medium-mesh sifter, sift to yield ⅔ cup pecan flour.
4. Zest 2 oranges with a 5-holed zester; juice enough oranges to yield 1¼ cups juice.
5. Using a mixer, beat egg yolks and brown sugar in a medium bowl until mixture is pale and, when beaters are lifted, falls in thick ribbons, 5 minutes. Beat in 2 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. orange juice (mixture will get more liquidy). Gently fold in pecan flour. Fold in chocolate mixture.
6. In another bowl with clean beaters, beat egg whites with salt until foamy. Gradually rain in 7 tbsp. granulated sugar; beat into soft peaks, 3 minutes. Gently fold half of egg whites into chocolate mixture; then fold in remaining whites.
7. Pour batter into pan and bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out with crumbs adhering, 1 to 1¼ hours. Let cool on a rack (it will sink a lot).
8. Make glaze: In a large frying pan, boil remaining orange juice, 2 tbsp. granulated sugar, and the zest over medium-high heat until reduced to ½ cup, 10 minutes. Sift powdered sugar into juice and whisk smooth. Let cool 5 minutes, then whisk in remaining 1 tsp. vanilla.
9. Let cake cool, then run a heated thin metal spatula (heat under hot water, then dry with a towel) around inside of pan.
10. Remove rim of pan. Starting from edge and working toward center, carefully trim uneven top layer from cake using a large serrated knife. Invert cake onto a plate.
11. Cut cake with a heated knife, wiping between slices. Drizzle slices with glaze.

**Find nut flours at amazon.com (pecan flour is called "meal").*

PER SERVING 575 Cal., 54% (309 Cal.) from fat; 5.6 g protein; 34 g fat (12 g sat.); 63 g carbo (1.2 g fiber); 148 mg sodium; 148 mg chol. **GF (with GF powdered sugar)/LS/V**

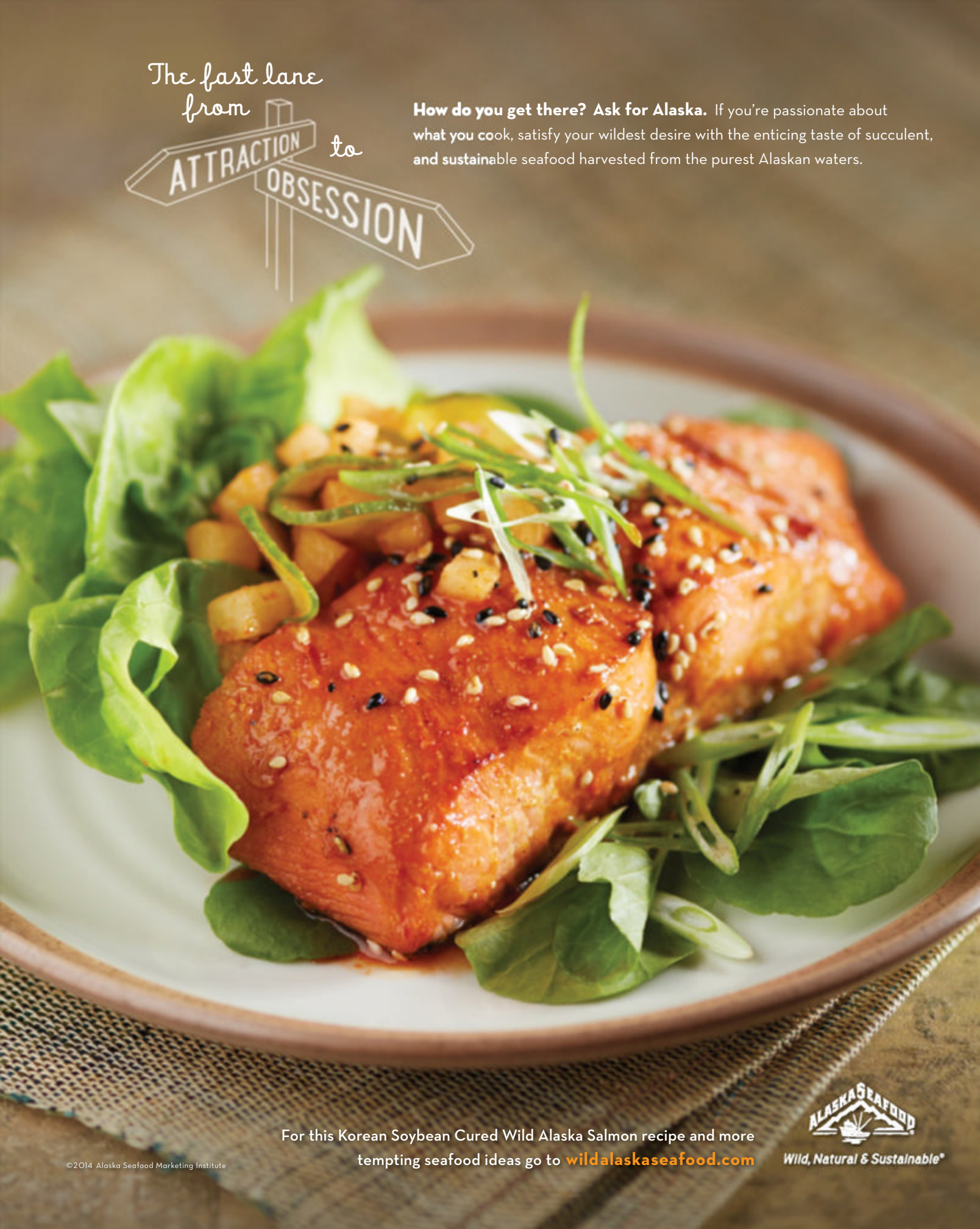
Holland's wine picks

Brown Estate 2011 "Chaos Theory"
(Chiles Valley District, Napa Valley)

Esterlina 2011 Esterlina Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir
(Anderson Valley)

Murrieta's Well 2012 "The Whip"
(Livermore Valley)

Urban Legend 2012 Sauvignon Blanc
(Lake County)



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GRILLED SWORDFISH TOASTS with LEMON-OLIVE TAPENADE

MAKES 4 / 30 MINUTES

A sandwich for dinner makes perfect sense when it's as elegant as this one, with hot-off-the-grill swordfish and the tang of preserved lemon and olives. If you can't find the tapenade ingredients, blend store-bought mayo with minced garlic, lemon zest, and chile flakes for a tasty substitute.

- 4 swordfish steaks (about 6 oz. each), dark portions removed
- 6 tbsp. olive oil, divided
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 slices rustic white bread cut from a loaf
- ¼ cup pitted Castelvetrano or other mild green olives
- 2 to 3 tbsp. *harissa** (North African chile-and-spice paste)
- 2 tbsp. chopped preserved lemon
- 1 large garlic clove
- 2 cups kale leaves, shredded

1. Preheat grill to medium-high (500°). Brush swordfish steaks with a total of 1 tbsp. oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill, turning once, until cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Meanwhile, brush bread with 1 tbsp. oil and grill until lightly toasted, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Transfer fish and bread to a plate.
2. Make tapenade: Blend olives, harissa, preserved lemon, garlic, and remaining ¼ cup oil in a blender until almost smooth, about 15 seconds. Spread each slice of bread with about 1 tbsp. tapenade, then top with kale and swordfish.

**Find harissa at well-stocked grocery stores, in tubes or jars.*

PER SANDWICH 522 Cal., 51% (264 Cal.) from fat; 37 g protein; 30 g fat (4.7 g sat.); 24 g carbo (2.7 g fiber); 562 mg sodium; 62 mg chol.

CROUTON and CHEESE OMELET

SERVES 2 / 20 MINUTES

Rye-bread croutons and nutty gruyère work well together for this dinner-worthy omelet, but you can use any combo of bread, cheese, and herbs you like.

- 3 thick slices rustic rye bread cut from a loaf, crusts trimmed
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and pepper
- 6 large eggs
- 1 tbsp. butter, divided
- 2½ tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley, divided
- 1½ tbsp. chopped chives, divided
- ½ cup shredded gruyère cheese, divided

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Cut bread slices into ½-in. cubes. In a bowl, toss cubes with oil. Spread on a baking sheet, season with a pinch *each* of salt and pepper, and bake until crisp, 8 to 10 minutes.
2. In a bowl, whisk eggs with salt and pepper to taste. Heat ½ tbsp. butter in an 8-in. nonstick frying pan over medium heat until foam subsides. Pour half of eggs into pan and swirl to spread to edges of pan. Sprinkle with 1 tbsp. parsley and ½ tbsp. chives.
3. Lift edge of eggs with a heatproof flexible spatula and tilt pan to let uncooked egg flow underneath. Continue lifting edge and tilting pan, working your way around all sides, until eggs are just set and top is still a little moist, about 2 minutes total.
4. Sprinkle ¼ cup cheese and ½ cup croutons over half of omelet. Loosen omelet with spatula. Tip pan to slide omelet, filled side first, onto a warmed plate; flip bare half over cheese as omelet leaves pan.
5. Make a second omelet the same way. Sprinkle remaining herbs over omelets just before serving.

PER OMELET 531 Cal., 63% (335 Cal.) from fat; 30 g protein; 38 g fat (15 g sat.); 19 g carbo (2.3 g fiber); 768 mg sodium; 679 mg chol. V

DIGITAL BONUS Watch our simple technique to get a perfect omelet every time: *sunset.com/omelet*.

PEA and FRESH MINT RAVIOLI

SERVES 4 / 30 MINUTES

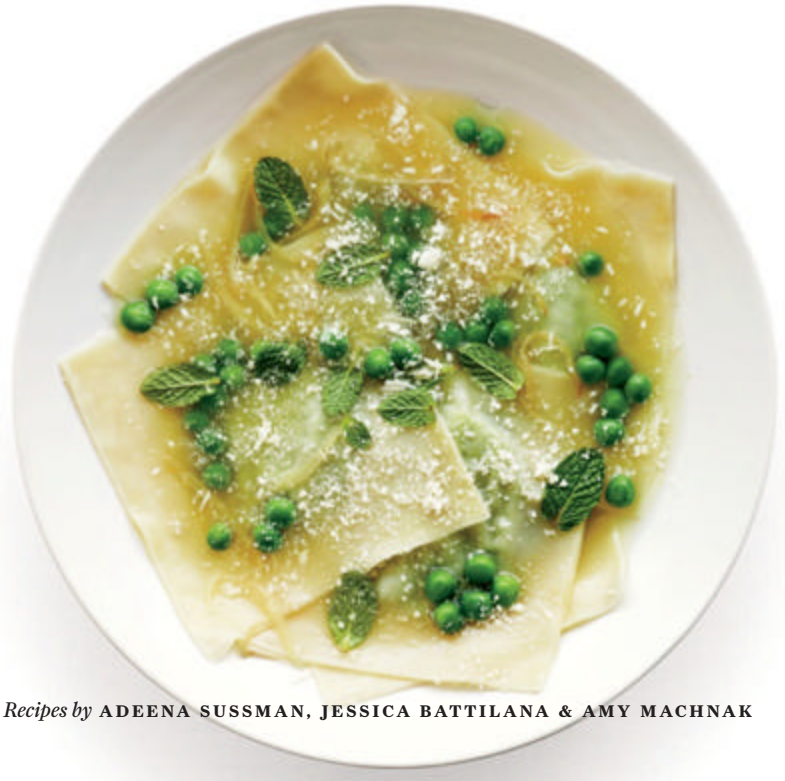
Frozen peas make this pasta especially fast, but shelled fresh peas are wonderful too; cook in boiling water 2 to 3 minutes before making the filling.

- 8 oz. frozen peas, divided
- ⅓ cup packed fresh mint leaves plus a few small leaves for garnish
- 1 small garlic clove
- ¼ cup whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 1½ tbsp. lemon juice
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 potsticker or egg roll wrappers (about 6 in. square)
- 1 large egg, beaten with 2 tbsp. water
- 1 small shallot, halved and sliced
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1 qt. reduced-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese

1. Rinse peas briefly with hot water to melt ice crystals. Chop ⅓ cup mint leaves and garlic in a food processor. Add 1 cup peas, the ricotta, lemon juice, salt, and oil and pulse to chop peas.
2. Lay out 4 wrappers. Working with 1 wrapper at a time, spoon a scant 1 tbsp. pea mixture near each corner, about ½ in. from edge and from the other spoonfuls. Brush around each mound with egg wash. Lay another wrapper (don't wash with egg) over filled wrapper. Using the side of your hand, press down around filling to seal into 4 mounds and press out any air. Cut between mounds to make 4 ravioli. Pinch edges closed on all sides.
3. In a large, wide pot, sauté shallot in butter over medium heat until softened, about 2 minutes, then add broth and bring to a boil. Add remaining ½ cup peas and the ravioli and simmer gently until ravioli are cooked and peas are bright green, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir to keep ravioli from sticking.
4. Serve in wide bowls, with mint and parmesan.

PER SERVING 403 Cal., 30% (119 Cal.) from fat; 21 g protein; 13 g fat (6.1 g sat.); 50 g carbo (4 g fiber); 894 mg sodium; 83 mg chol. LC/V

DIGITAL BONUS See how the ravioli are filled: *sunset.com/fillravioli*.



Recipes by ADEENA SUSSMAN, JESSICA BATTILANA & AMY MACHNAK

ANNABELLE BREAKEY (3; FOOD STYLING: FANNY PAN)

In the SUNSET KITCHEN

TIPS FROM OUR TEAM

KITCHEN TALK

THE GREAT ASPARAGUS DEBATE

We asked you, our Facebook friends, to tell us which you like better, thick or thin asparagus—and how you like to eat them. Add your ideas at *sunset.com/kitchenconversation.*

"Thin, with a big medium-rare steak on top."
—BRANDON MARTIN

"Thin ... with my fingers."
—SHERI M. SHAW

"Thick, because they roast better. Break up with a little good-quality olive oil, sea salt, and pepper and roast. Toss with a little black-fig balsamic ... mmm. That could be dinner!"
—CINDY GROCE ADAMS

COOKBOOK OF THE MONTH

The perfect egg

After Easter, we relish a good week's worth of egg salad sandwiches. In *The Perfect Egg* (Ten Speed Press; $19), Teri Lyn Fisher and Jenny Park share some inventive versions. Start with their classic recipe, then add ingredients to taste to create one of the combos below.

Classic egg salad sandwiches
Combine 8 peeled, chopped, hard-cooked large **eggs***; ¼ cup **mayonnaise**; 2 tbsp. chopped **dill pickle**; 2 tsp. **Dijon mustard**; 1½ tsp. sliced **chives**; ½ tsp. **cider vinegar**; and ¼ tsp. each **kosher salt** and **pepper**. Spread between 8 lightly toasted slices **white** or rye **bread**. **MAKES 4 SANDWICHES / 35 MINUTES**
*Cover eggs with 1 in. water; bring to a boil. Remove from heat; cover. Let stand 12 minutes. Drain and peel.

DIGITAL BONUS Get all our favorite egg recipes: *sunset.com/eggs.*

TOP TOOLS

ZEST QUEST

The familiar box grater works fine for most needs, but sometimes a dish requires a little nuance—as we learned when zesting oranges for the glaze on Tanya Holland's chocolate cake (page 96). Here are three zesters to consider adding to your kitchen arsenal—and the best ways to use them.

5-HOLED ZESTER
Long, thin, distinct shreds disperse evenly for a thick glaze, like the one used on our chocolate cake, delivering hits of flavor.

CHANNEL KNIFE
Consider yourself an amateur bartender? Invest in a V-shaped blade, which makes thickish spirals to accent cocktails.

MICROPLANE
A quick scrape creates a fluffy pile of extra-thin shreds, ideal for vinaigrettes.

WE'RE LOVING ...

Hibiscus flowers

After using hibiscus flowers in our strawberry cooler (page 87), try the leftovers as a snack with a glass of mescal, as they do in Mexico. Pat the drained, soaked hibiscus very dry. Deep-fry in vegetable oil a big spoonful at a time until dark purple but not black (30 to 45 seconds at 375°); drain and sprinkle with salt.

ANNABELLE BREAKEY (4; FOOD STYLING: FANNY PAN); ILLUSTRATIONS: JOE MCKENDRY

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Warm Apple Compote

Ingredients
1 1/2 tbsp butter or margarine
1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped apples
1/2 tbsp lemon juice
1/8 tsp nutmeg
1/4 cup C&H® Pourable Golden Brown Sugar

Instructions
In a skillet, melt butter over medium-low heat. Stir in apples, lemon juice and nutmeg. Cook, stirring occasionally, until apples soften, about 7 minutes. Reduce heat to low and stir in sugar. Cook, stirring gently, until mixture becomes syrupy, about 2 minutes. Serve warm as a topping for pancakes, waffles, ice cream or oatmeal.

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In the SUNSET KITCHEN

from
MARILYN RITCHIE
San Jose

WINNING READER RECIPE

WARM CHICKEN and SAUTÉED MUSHROOM SALAD

"My family loves salads for weeknight dinners," says reader Marilyn Ritchie. Inspired by a recipe for warm mushroom dressing, Ritchie added chicken, goat cheese, and extra balsamic vinegar to come up with this luxurious main dish. When she wants to splurge, she uses shiitakes. **SERVES 4 / 30 MINUTES**

1 pkg. (5 oz.) mixed salad greens
2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
3 tbsp. olive oil, divided
1 pkg. (8 oz.) sliced mushrooms
1 tsp. minced garlic
3 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
¼ cup thinly sliced red onion
4 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
¼ cup toasted pine nuts

1. Put greens and chicken in a large serving bowl; set aside. Heat 1 tbsp. oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and garlic and cook until browned and fragrant, about 5 minutes (longer if mushrooms give off a lot of water).
2. Add remaining 2 tbsp. oil, the vinegar, and mustard, stirring to combine. Cook until mixture starts to boil. Pour over greens, tossing to coat. Top with onion, goat cheese, and pine nuts.

PER SERVING 419 Cal., 61% (256 Cal.) from fat; 32 g protein; 29 g fat (9.4 g sat.); 9.5 g carbo (1.6 g fiber); 449 mg sodium; 93 mg chol. **LC/LS**

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Buttercream Frosting

Ingredients

3 3/4 cups (1 lb. box) C&H® Powdered Sugar
1/2 cup butter (1 stick), softened
3 to 4 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

In a large bowl with electric mixer at low speed, combine sugar, butter, milk and vanilla. Beat at medium speed 1 to 2 minutes until creamy. If desired, add more milk until frosting is spreading consistency.

Makes enough to fill and frost a 2-layer cake, a 13x9x2-inch sheet cake or 24 cupcakes.

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You can also find our **Buttercream Frosting** recipe on the **1 lb. C&H® Powdered Sugar** box.

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SIP

HOW TO STORE & POUR

Relax and keep it simple—you don't need a fancy wine cellar or multiple gadgets to drink well. *By Sara Schneider*

AS WINE GIZMOS proliferate and sommeliers become superstars, it's easy to think that you don't have the right stuff to serve wine properly at home. I say, Nonsense. Wine needs only simple treatment to show well, and it takes just a little bit of thought to launch a "cellar" of your own.

Storing

If your time frame for storing a bottle of wine is just long enough to get it home from the supermarket, you're in good company: The vast majority of bottles are drunk within hours of being purchased. Nonetheless, don't let bottles sit in a hot car while you're doing errands, because heat is an enemy—it prematurely oxidizes wine and can even push out corks. Wine's other main foes are light and vibration, both of which speed up the aging process too. So the top of the fridge or the closet by the furnace aren't great parking spots. But any dark, still corner that maintains a stable, reasonably cool temperature will keep bottles in good shape. Sure, an ideal cellar might hover around 55°, but the most important thing is to avoid wide swings.

Any dark spot that maintains a stable, reasonably cool temperature will keep your bottles in good shape.

If you plan to store bottles longer than a few months, make sure the wine stays in contact with the cork (if corks dry out, ruinous air can get in). Of course, official wine racks are made to do this. But sans racks, just turn wine boxes on their sides or upside down.

Serving

In general, most of us serve red wine a bit too warm (room temperature) and white a little too cold (refrigerator temperature). Most reds taste best under 70°, and lighter-bodied reds like Pinot Noir quite a bit under. Don't be afraid to give them a quick chill in the fridge. Conversely, pull whites out a little while before you serve them so they can warm up. Lighter, crisper whites like Sauvignon Blanc don't need to warm up much, but richer whites—Chardonnay, Viognier—will release their interesting layers more readily at about 55°. Ursula Hermacinski, a renowned wine auctioneer, has a great plan: "Twenty minutes before dinner, pull the white wine out of the fridge and put the red wine in."

Another step will improve young, tannic reds: Give them some air. I don't mean pull the cork an hour before dinner so the wine can "breathe" (precious little oxygen makes it through the neck of the bottle). Instead, splash the wine into a container (an official decanter or just a pitcher) and let it sit for 45 minutes to an hour. Or for faster results, use an aerator, a device that mixes air into the wine as you pour through it into a glass (two good brands: Vinturi and Tribella).

Preserving

Although tools abound to save leftover wine (vacuum pumps that pull out the air, canisters that spray in nitrogen or argon), I've found many of these to be more trouble than they're worth. The simplest trick I know is to keep some empty half-bottles (splits) on hand. When you drink half of a 750-ml. bottle, pour the rest through a funnel into a split, recork it, and store it in the fridge. With very little air to oxidize it, the wine will keep for up to five days or so.

Collector starter kit

Most wines aren't meant to age—they're ready to drink when you buy them. That said, when you move up the price chain a little, bottles tend to promise to get more interesting over time (how much time varies among varieties and vintages—the subject of much debate). The simplest plan: Trust producers with track records, and you'll be rewarded for your wait. A handful of wines can launch a cellar. Think about the times you wish you had a special bottle on hand—and buy (more than one, to kick-start things) for those occasions.

1. A food-friendly red to take to a dinner party
A cool-climate Pinot Noir is the best bet to flatter many dishes (trusted producers: Adelsheim, Au Bon Climat, Brewer-Clifton, Dutton-Goldfield, Foxen, Merry Edwards, Peay, Ponzi).

2. A splurge red fit for a celebration
Invest in a Cabernet Sauvignon with a balance of good fruit, tannin, and acidity (Chappellet, Corison, Grgich Hills, J. Davies, Mayacamas, Spottswoode, Truchard).

3. A bottle representing a variety and region you're excited about right now
Syrah from Eastern Washington, say (à Maurice, Dusted Valley, Gramercy, Reynvaan Family, Rulo, Spring Valley "Nina Lee," Waters).

4. A top version of the country's favorite wine
Chardonnay will please your out-of-town guests, and well-balanced Chards age well for a few years (Benovia, Lynmar Estate, MacRostie, Red Car, Sandhi, Three Sticks).

5. A sparkling wine, for the end of a long week
Break out the bubbles—it's Friday! (Domaine Carneros, Gloria Ferrer, Iron Horse, Mumm Napa, Roederer Estate, Schramsberg.)

Join the Sunset Wine Club! *Get top wines, pairing tips, notes, and event info from wine editor Sara Schneider: sunset.com/wineclub.*

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ASK SUNSET

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT LIFE IN THE WEST? WE HAVE THE ANSWERS.

Q: I believe that lantana plants are drought-tolerant. But some people have told me they need regular watering to keep growing. Can you settle this subject?

—MICHAEL COWEN, NEWBURY PARK, CA

DEAR MICHAEL Lantana (both the small shrub and ground-cover types) is indeed drought-tolerant; once it's established, you can get by with watering it every two to three weeks. (If you plant it in a container, you'll need to water more often.) Unthirstiness is only one of lantana's strengths. It grows fast, and in frost-free regions such as where you live, it will add color to your garden year-round. (In colder climes, it's planted as an annual.) The foliage has a resinous aroma, and the blooms attract hummingbirds and butterflies (*Lantana camara* 'Dallas Red' is shown below). Lantana has two drawbacks. In parts of Hawaii, it grows so wildly that it's considered a noxious weed. And its berries are toxic—keep kids away from them.

Spring in Tucson: prime time at Saguaro National Park.

Q: My girlfriend and I have four days to take a short trip to someplace warm and interesting. We'll leave from the L.A. area and expect to fly, but not too far.

—JOE COOK, APTOS, CA

DEAR JOE Warm, interesting, and a short flight from Southern California—that spells Tucson to us. Downtown is hopping with cool shops, a new streetcar system, and excellent dining; we like Proper for steak and Scott & Co. for cocktails. Good lodging options include that Southwest classic, the Arizona Inn *(arizonainn.com)*, and the more intimate Inns at El Rancho Merlita *(ranchomerlita.com)*. Weather in April is friendly, with daily highs about 80°—ideal to hit the trails (early) in the eastern district of nearby Saguaro National Park, home to Arizona's signature cactus.

Q: We're ready to move our patio furniture back outside, but we hate it (we have those white plastic chairs and tables everybody has). What can we upgrade to that's durable and attractive? —C.L., BEND, OR

DEAR C.L. For good looks and low maintenance, we advise sticking to plastic. Just try nicer-looking plastic. We really like the playfully bold recycled-plastic outdoor furniture made by Loll Designs *(lolldesigns.com)*, shown at right. We're also fans of our own Home by Sunset patio furniture (Ashland, Magnolia, and Summit lines) from Orchard Supply Hardware *(osh.com)*; the pieces have a more traditional style and are made of weather-resistant materials. For other outdoor chairs, see "Hot Seats" on page 58.

Email your questions about Western gardening, travel, food, wine, or home design to *asksunset@sunset.com*.

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FROM TOP: EBBE ROE YOVINO-SMITH, LINDA LAMB PETERS

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*5g Fat per serving